

THE INDEPENDENT

Monday 13 October 1997

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INSIDE TODAY

15/COMMENT

Polly Toynbee:
Enjoy your holiday, wreck the planet



20/SPACE

Cassini's
billion-mile
flying to
Saturn



TODAY'S NEWS

Mentally ill kill more often than we think

The impression that it is rare for murders to be committed by mentally ill patients released under care in the community is false, according to a study by the Zito Trust. It has found that murders are committed by former mental hospital patients roughly once every two weeks - nearly half of their victims being people the former patients had not previously met. That adds up to about one in 25 of all murders. Page 4

Blair-Adams handshake

Tony Blair will shake hands today with Gerry Adams when he spends 10 minutes with the Sinn Féin leader on a visit to the Stormont talks in Belfast. The encounter, which will take place behind closed doors in deference to Unionist sensitivities, carries heavy symbolism: it will be the first physical contact in modern times between a British prime minister and a leading hard-line Republican. Report, page 4; leading article, page 14

The other Amritsar

Tomorrow the Queen flies to Amritsar in the Punjab - controversially, because everyone knows what happened there. In 1919 British-led troops slaughtered at least 379 unarmed demonstrators, an incident regarded as uniquely horrific in the Indian freedom struggle. But Peter Popham, our Delhi correspondent, has visited a town in Gujarat where, three years after Amritsar, some 2,500 Indians are thought to have been killed in a lesser known British massacre. Page 5

Extra £250m for health

The Government has found an extra £250m to help the NHS avert a crisis this winter, mostly by "fining" the Ministry of Defence as a penalty for the department overspending last year. Page 3

Gays, blacks and toffs

The British Army is troubled by the strains of race, sex and class. This week it will launch a drive to recruit blacks (by recalling Lord Kitchener, famous former imperialist). Meanwhile, senior officers have decided that a Major who published a Fabian pamphlet criticising the elitism of the Army's higher echelons will be court-martialled for his pains. But ministers have decided to overturn Labour's former expressed intention, and instead support senior officers in refusing to allow homosexuals to join the forces. Page 9

SEEN & HEARD

Before going to bed she bade her family good night in her usual Scottish accent, but when she greeted them in the morning she sounded South African. The woman, who has not been identified, is suffering from Foreign Accent Syndrome. Her condition has been blamed on a stroke in her sleep and has turned her life upside down as friends and family try to reacquire themselves with her. There have been only 12 other recorded cases in the world, including British people sounding Mexican and a Portuguese American sounding Chinese.

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TELEVISION The Eye, page 12
CROSSWORDS Page 20 and the Eye, page 9

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'It wasn't me, mate!' So who was it then?



The same old story - or not? An England fan appeals to Italian police during the first half of Saturday's World Cup qualifying match with Italy in the Stadio Olimpico, Rome, after one of the baton charges which caused outrage

FULL REPORT
PAGE 3

Cut state aid, free the market: that's Labour

A free-market drive to promote enterprise, increase labour mobility, and reduce state aid will loom large in the agenda for Britain's European Union presidency, to be unveiled today by Gordon Brown. The Treasury's Jobs Action Plan includes confirmation that the national minimum wage might be set lower for young people.

The Chancellor will, in Luxembourg today, let his counterparts around Europe know what Britain thinks about crucial policies affecting the move towards a single European currency. He will argue that action to promote employment is essential both for the single market and for a successful and sustainable euro for those who decide to join.

The Treasury sees the Jobs Action Plan plan as helping to promote employment growth in the EU, which it sees as an essential precondition for eventual British entry into a single currency.

Mr Brown's speech coincides with the distribution to today's meeting of the finance ministers of a European Council document encouraging the Chancellor to stick to his tough budgetary policies as a means of bringing Britain's deficit within the criteria required by the Maastricht Treaty. In stressing the importance of "of maintaining a rigorous control of public expenditure" the document acknowledges that such controls have "featured in budget commitments in recent years".

But the Chancellor's fellow finance ministers will also be interested in what his paper reveals about how Tony Blair

and be intend to use Britain's presidency, beginning in January, to overcome resistance to completion of the single market and promotion of small- and medium-sized business throughout the community. Identifying the focus of the conference, the paper says "the UK recognises that the development of a culture in which enterprise can flourish and is rewarded is a crucial issue not just for itself but for Europe as a whole".

The plan seeks to explain New Labour's "third way" between wholesale labour market deregulation and the traditional European "social model" of elaborate employee protection. The paper speaks of the need to strike "the right bal-

But it also adopts, in a section entitled "Making Markets Work Better" a markedly free enterprise tone in describing some of its priorities for the EU. These also include:

● A drive on competitiveness, including enforcement of the single market. This will include an effort to lower state aid by member countries which it says "distort competition and investment decisions" and so "actually reduce levels of output and destroy jobs."

● Improvements in the EU's regulatory regime. The paper discloses that the Government is also planning a presidency conference on "Better government: a more effective regulation" intended to bring together "EU and international best regulatory practice."

● Labour mobility. The paper lays heavy emphasis on the role of increasing jobs and employability - allowing workers to find jobs away from their own home districts. The paper says that, recognising that fear of losing low rent council homes plays a big part in discouraging mobility and the government is therefore promoting a healthy private rented sector including grants to facilitate people moving from low cost cost housing in one area to another. The paper pointedly says that "promoting labour market mobility will be especially important in the context of the creation of a single currency".

The paper is largely a description of what the UK is doing to promote jobs and labour flexibility and makes it clear that the means of job creation will differ in each country. But it will leave Mr Brown's colleagues in no doubt that he and Mr Blair are determined to use the Presidency to improve competitiveness - for example with the US and the Far East - and lubricate the EU labour market.

BY DONALD
MACINTYRE

ance" between "economic efficiency and social inclusion".

The paper strongly emphasises the importance of the Government's welfare to work programme, of extending employment opportunities to those excluded from the labour market, and the desirability of its planned national minimum wage. It says that a minimum wage is "right in principle" though it says it will not be set by "rigid formula". It confirms that the Government will consider lower minimum rates for younger workers.

The paper also says that British unemployment will not be reduced "overnight" and adds: "We will need to judge the success of our policies in 5-10 years, taking account of the effect of the business cycle."

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COLUMN ONE

Family pleads for end to get-well card deluge

When seven-year-old Craig Shergold was in hospital with a brain tumour he set out to collect a world record number of get-well cards. Eleven years later, the record is broken and he is cured but the cards still arrive by the sackload. Now the family is appealing for them to stop.

Such is the deluge of good wishes that Craig Shergold's family home has been designated a postal district in its own right with its own post-code. It is the only way the Post Office can cope with the 500 letters that still arrive each day for him.

At the last count he had received 140 million cards from 170 countries around the world. He achieved his dream of a place in the *Guinness Book of Records* and the greetings card industry was so grateful for the business that it bought him a full-size pool table as a Christmas present.

Now the family and the Post Office are begging for it to stop. Craig has become the victim of a series of chain letters that have inundated the family with company business cards and compliment slips. Some used his real name while others were addressed to Craig John, Craig Shepherd, John Gary and Gary Richards but all gave the correct address in Carshalton, Surrey.



Even if the family's appeal is successful in stemming the flow from the United Kingdom, it is unlikely to curb it entirely. In the past three months thousands of postcards have arrived from Poland. Earlier this year, thousands were arriving from China, their senders unaware that the seven-year-old cancer victim is now a robust, healthy 18-year-old who wishes to be left in peace.

A spokeswoman for the Royal Mail said: "This is an unfortunate hoax. It started as a genuine appeal but got out of hand. The family and the Royal Mail want it to stop but we have a duty to deliver items as addressed."

The idea for the record bid was suggested to Craig (above) by a nurse at the Royal Marsden Cancer Hospital in London where he was being treated. He later underwent brain surgery in the United States. As news of his plight spread, letters began arriving from all over the world with signatories including Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev. At its height 300 sacks of mail a week were being delivered and there were separate collection points in America and Australia.

A decade later, a team of volunteers, including the local scout troop, is required to help the family deal with the post. Stan White, a neighbour, said: "All the letters have to be opened because some contain cheques. The stamps are sold and the letters sent for recycling which has raised £63,000 for charity. Craig gets a lot of fluffy toys, cars and sweets which are sent to hospitals and charities."

The *Guinness Book of Records*, which warned the Shergold family of the possible consequences of the appeal, has since deleted the category in the hope of halting spread of the phenomenon. In the past the family faced the daunting task of sorting genuine letters from the avalanche of cards. Their telephone was cut off on one occasion because they never found the bill or the red reminder that followed it.

They have since moved house which makes it easier to sort their correspondence. But the get-well messages keep on coming.

— Jeremy Laurence

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PEOPLE



Playing to the gallery: Michael Grade at the microphone as he unveils a Blue Plaque at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, as a tribute to his uncle, Lord Delfont, the theatre impresario; comedian Norman Wisdom and friends look on. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Dylan Thomas finds poetic justice at last

Dylan Thomas, the Welsh poet whose reputation spanned the Atlantic, did not drink himself to death as legend has it, but was the victim of a doctor's error, according to a book published this week.

Thomas, famed for the radio play *Under Milk Wood*, died in 1953 at the age of 39. Officially the cause of his death in a New York hospital was "acute alcoholic poisoning" after a bout in which Thomas was said to have drunk 18 straight Bourbon whiskeys.

But the book, *The Death of Dylan Thomas* by British biographer George Tremlett and North Carolina neurosurgeon James Nashold, will claim that Thomas was never as big a drinker as he was reputed to be.

The real cause of death, it will say, was that his American physician, Milton Feltenstein, mistook a diabetic coma for a drunken stupor and wrongly pre-

scribed a course of injections including cortisone, morphine and benzadrine.

Tremlett was not immediately available for comment at the bookshop he helps to run in Laugharne, the Welsh village where Thomas once lived, and from which he got many of his ideas for the mythical town of Llareggub where the action in *Under Milk Wood* takes place.

Thomas, perennially struggling to live off his earnings as a writer, had gone to the United States in 1953 for a series of poetry recitals. His reputation, and his haunting deep bass voice, attracted crowds of fans to the events.

But on 4 November, his American mistress Liz Reitel called Dr Feltenstein to Thomas's room at the Chelsea Hotel in New York where he began the injections. Five days later Thomas died in the city, at St Vincent's Hospital.

Vichy official on trial takes weekend break



Maurice Papon, the Vichy official on trial in Bordeaux for crimes against humanity, made the most of his restored freedom at the weekend.

Mr Papon, 87, was released from custody by the court on Friday, in deference to his great age and medical condition. He was taken ill with heart trouble in jail on Thursday night.

On Friday evening, he was discovered with his son and daughter eating a celebration dinner in a top-class restaurant in Margaux, in the wine country 20 miles from Bordeaux.

The restaurant, the Pavillon Margaux, was cleared of all other customers. Mr Papon and his family spent the weekend at an exclusive, chateau-hotel nearby.

the Relais Margaux. Mr Papon's weekend activities compounded the fury of relatives of some of the 1,484 Jews allegedly arrested and deported on his orders in the Bordeaux area in 1942-44.

Gérard Welzer, a lawyer representing two Bordeaux families, said: "Deported Jews did not get the chance to stay in a chateau."

Mr Welzer announced that his clients were dropping out of the case because of the court's decision to allow Papon to go free.

A similar decision was made on Saturday by another lawyer, Arno Karstedt, representing the association of sons and daughters of deported Jews. The trial, expected to last another ten weeks, resumes today.

— John Lichfield, Paris

UPDATE

HEALTH

Search for prostate-cancer genes

A search is under way for genes thought to be largely responsible for many cases of prostate cancer.

Researchers are looking for two kinds of gene. "High risk" genes increase the likelihood of developing the disease, while "low penetrance" genes are less of a risk but may be far more common. Scientists from the Institute of Cancer Research expect to find low penetrance genes in many prostate cancer patients, even those with no family history of the disease.

The search for these genes will focus on almost 1,000 patients being treated at the Royal Marsden hospital in Sutton, south-west London. Work to identify high-risk genes will involve 109 hospitals throughout the country.

Dr Ros Eeles, clinical senior lecturer at the Institute, said: "It is very important to identify low penetrance genes because the indications are that they may be relevant to a large number of cases. Discovery of these genes will increase our understanding of the disease and open up the possibility of preventative treatments."

To help with the research the institute wants to hear from men aged under 55 suffering from prostate cancer, brothers with prostate cancer where one brother is under 65, and families with three or more cases of the disease at any age. Prostate cancer is the fourth commonest cause of death from cancer in UK males, affecting one in four men by 2018.

SPORT

Ski rage gathers speed on slopes



Ski rage could hit the slopes this winter with aggressive attitudes likely to lead to more accidents, it was claimed yesterday.

Congestion on the slopes and skiers being more adventurous could prove "a lethal cocktail with accidents just waiting to happen," said insurance company BUPA TravelCover.

"We are already hearing worrying reports of ski rage on and off the pistes," said the company's marketing manager Michele da Silva.

The company reckons that last winter alone, more than 70,000 holidaymakers on ski holidays abroad were either treated for some kind of injury or responsible for causing an accident themselves. Potentially hazardous pursuits such as snowboarding, heli-skiing and acrobatic snow jumping were leading to an acceleration of injuries, the company added.

TECHNOLOGY

Software pirates unrepentant

One in three of the computer programs being used in Britain is a counterfeit or illegal copy, according to a new report.

Microsoft, the software giant, commissioned a report examining how software theft was perceived by small businesses - and found that many firms thought they had little or no chance of being caught.

Of more than 500 small business computer users questioned, 97 per cent said they understood that each piece of software needed a licence. But 68 per cent thought it was "not at all easy" to be caught using software illegally. Microsoft is a key player in efforts to prevent illegal software use in Britain, working with organisations such as the Business Software Alliance to combat the problem - which costs it and other software companies as much as £100m a year.

Microsoft had seized more than 5,000 illegal copies so far this year, Microsoft anti-piracy manager David Gregory said, adding: "We suspect that this is just the tip of the iceberg." More information is at <http://www.microsoft.com/uk/legalware>.

Amis seeks fresher fields in America

In an announcement which distinctly underwhelmed the literary world, Martin Amis yesterday confirmed he is planning to abandon London in favour of New York. But not just yet.

The novelist said he is attracted to the United States because the country is more "dynamic and vibrant" than Britain and therefore more stimulating for someone in his profession.

"It is where history is being written, it's the one major superpower left in the world," he said. "It is more like a world than a country and that would be an exciting place for a writer to be."

Despite this desire to move, Amis, 48, says he will wait three or four years until his children Louis, 13, and Jacob, 11, from his marriage to Antonia Phillips, are older. He also has a baby daughter, Fernanda, by his current partner, New York writer Isobel Fonseca.

Literary figures were puzzled by the news yesterday. "He and Isobel already spend a lot of time in New York anyway," said one. "So it will hardly mean a major change."

Amis, whose novel *Night Train* has just been published to mixed reviews, explicitly denied reports that he is leaving because of the British media and its seeming fascination with the writer's private life.

In recent years Amis has been criticised over the size of his writing fees and an operation reported to have cost £14,000 to straighten his teeth. Interest has also been fuelled by his divorce and the recent death of his father. But Amis said: "It has nothing to do with the media... it does not impinge on my life, how could it?"

— Michael Street



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هكذا من الأصل

England fans outraged by 'brutal Italians'

Football may have become the fashionable talk of middle-class dinner parties, but as fans who travelled to England's World Cup qualifier in Rome found out the world still believes that the English only go to games to fight. Ian Burrell reports

Despite the spectacular successes of the football authorities and police in improving safety levels in and around our soccer stadia, football hooliganism is seen as an inherently English trait. Like afternoon tea, soccer violence has diminishing relevance here but no one from overseas seems to have noticed.

It was dubbed the "English disease" during the 1980s - when every foreign venture by an English team seemed to be accompanied by appalling acts of violence by their followers - and the name is now indelible.

At first glance, the ugly clashes between England supporters and Italian police in the Stadio Olimpico on Saturday seemed as familiar and disgraceful as those of old.

Yet whereas once politicians and football chiefs were queuing up to condemn fans and call for the toughest of punishments, yesterday there were words of sympathy.

David Mellor, former minister and head of the Government's Football Task Force, accused the Italian police of a "gross over-response" and said "that was not the behaviour of a civilised police force".

He added: "I think the Italians should be ashamed of themselves for the manner in which they reacted."

Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, was also concerned. "I have spoken to friends of mine this morning who were out there and they said it was terrible. From what they have told me some of the fans were provoked by police," he said.

Yet in Italy the view was diametrically opposite. The Rome-based newspaper *Il Messaggero* observed: "They gave themselves up to an orgy of beer, their own sweat and the tears of others."

The newspaper noted that pre-match violence broke out at "the time for tea", commenting: "Naked torsos, strong tattoos. Gorilla-style actions near the Spanish Steps."

Hooliganism is now a weekly occurrence at grounds throughout continental Europe. The recent fixture between Germany and Poland was the scene of some of the most brutal and sustained spectator violence ever seen at an international.

Organised fights between gangs that follow Dutch clubs now far exceed anything seen in Britain. And the Stadio Olimpico itself has witnessed blazing fires and running battles between the rival supporters of Roma and Lazio.

Yet the notion that football thuggery is quintessentially English persists.

A decision by British police to issue a very public pre-match warning that 700 English hooligans were on their way to Rome did not help. Mr Mellor was soon ringing alarm bells about the frame of mind of the Italian police and the way they were planning to crack down on the English.

Undoubtedly there was a small trouble-making element among the English contingent - and 23 were arrested - but the nature of the national team's support has



Back home: Julie O'Malley and Paul Saddler at Gatwick yesterday after returning from Rome. They had paid £450 each as part of a hospitality package. Ms O'Malley was at her first match and vowed never to go again after being charged by police. "About 1,000 people came running and I was literally being trampled" Photograph: Andrew Buurman

altered radically in recent years along with the change in the sport's image at home. Many of those at Saturday's game were guests on corporate packages.

Julie O'Malley, 23, and Daljit Khaira, 27, had paid £450 each and were part of a hospitality treat for employees at the London electronics company CHS.

Both women were at their first football match and vowed never to go again. Ms O'Malley said she was part of a group who were charged by police. "About 1,000 people came running and I was literally being trampled. I think I would have died if my friend had not pulled me on to a wall."

Jim Tyrrell, a 36-year-old marketing

manager from London, added: "It was extremely brutal. The police were clearly terrified and had been wound up to the point where they were treating us as if we were all hooligans."

"There were 20 to 30 English fans causing trouble and they should have sorted those out. We were treated like criminals for 24 hours. It was disgusting."

As the Football Association announced an inquiry into the ticketing arrangements it appeared that the trigger for the violence was the decision to direct a section of the England support to part of the ground where there was little segregation from the home support. Fans say they were pelted

with missiles and when some retaliated, the police charged the visiting supporters.

Bryan Harris, 63-year-old sales manager for a communications company, said: "The police were just biting out indiscriminately. We were shouting for them to stop but it was relentless."

Innocent victims many may have been, and one English fan was in hospital with a stab wound yesterday. But outside Britain the cries of innocence are likely to go unheard. Meanwhile the images of violence shown around the world - most significantly to the French police officers who will patrol next summer's World Cup games - will reinforce the hooligan stereotype.

Defence hit for NHS winter cash injection

Defence spending is to be cut to help provide a winter lifeline of up to £250m for hospitals facing a crisis shortage of beds. Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports on the drastic measures.

Almost £170m is to be switched from defence to health as part of an emergency package of action to keep down hospital waiting lists this winter. Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said yesterday.

Further cash injections are expected from the Department of Trade and Industry and a higher-than-expected European Union budget rebate, bringing the country's hard-pressed hospitals a bonus of as much as £250m. Mr Darling said that the Conservative government had provided an extra £25m to help the hospitals overcome last winter's bed shortage.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his July Budget that a further £1.2 billion would be made available for the NHS next year, on top of Conservative spending plans, but there have been mounting warnings that no help was being provided to meet this winter's expected crisis.

Given Labour's key election pledge of "shorter waiting lists", the Treasury was left with no alternative but to find additional money to avert a repeat of an annual crisis which leaves patients kept waiting for treatment on trolleys in hospital corridors.

James Johnson, chairman of the British Medical Association's consultants' committee, told BBC radio's *World this Week* end: "I earnestly hope the extra money can be released to the NHS now, so that some wards that have been mothballed can be reopened and additional staff recruited."

"For the last 10 years, any empty bed has been seen as inefficient and ruthlessly cut out as part of the pressure for efficiency savings. But to be able to admit emergencies, you must have some empty beds."

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, also welcomed the imminent cash bail-out, saying: "This is a significantly useful contribution. Of course we would have liked more but with good targeting and co-ordination this should really help this winter."

But there was strong criticism from the Tories. Peter Lilley, shadow Chancellor, protested: "A U-turn like this should have been made in a statement to Parliament, where it could be subjected to proper scrutiny." He also questioned whether an overstretched Ministry of Defence could afford its £170m contribution. "This doesn't hang together," he said. "It doesn't add up, and that's why it's been slipped out in this way."

Mr Darling - the Government's spending axeman - said that with a defence budget of £20bn, there was scope for sacrifice.

I was there, it was ghastly

It began good-humouredly enough, with the Football Association brass band blasting out "Here We Go, Here We Go" on the Spanish Steps and a group of Italian fans trying to drown them out with a gassy rendition of their national anthem.

But that was Friday evening. By yesterday lunchtime, when the bulk of the English football fans left, Rome was trembling with fear as it counted its injured and cleared up the debris carpeting its streets and piazzas.

For a mercifully short weekend, the Eternal City stood aghast as groups of unruly men chugged back beer after beer, hurled glasses and bottles in all directions, stripped down to their (mostly) unsightly, sweaty

waists and sang football chants to a bewildered audience.

The menace of violence was never far from the surface, and it was not just the hard core of 70-odd supporters specifically labelled as hooligans that looked like they might throw a punch as soon as look at you. The word "Italians" was barely uttered without the epithet "fucking" clucked in before it.

By Saturday afternoon, owners of the fancy boutiques of the area around Piazza del Popolo and the Spanish Steps were forced to close for fear of an impending rampage. On Via del Corso, Rome's answer to Oxford Street, a group of English fans threw bottles and rocks at riot policemen.

At this point, Italy's own contingent of fascists and bootboys weighed in. At around 5 o'clock, full-blown street battles broke out, fought with bottles and cobblestones lifted from a nearby roadworks site. The windows of one bar were smashed in.

After the match, the main thoroughfares were patrolled by police cars with sirens blaring, and the search for signs of trouble did not let up even after the first eight charter flights had taken several hundred fans home. One English fan was stabbed overnight in a well-heeled residential quarter - but that, on this craziest of weekends, seemed like a minor incident after all the rest.

— Andrew Gumbel

So was I, and it wasn't

At the end of this pulsating, emotionally draining match, something bizarre happened. The neatly dressed Italian contingent in front of us turned round to applaud us. They were not taking the mickey, but exhibiting a concept thought to have deserted football with the rattle: sportsmanship.

Later on, two of our party were searching in vain for a cab as a private car pulled up. When they told the Italian driver they needed to get to the airport, 30 kilometres away, he simply said, "hop in, I'll take you there". At the airport, he refused to accept any money because he liked the English.

This is entirely consistent with a day which for me was

much more about harmony than hoolies. My impression was that this Italian job was for the vast majority of English fans nothing more sinister than good old-fashioned fun.

Timothy Bell, a computer salesman from Camberley, bore this out. In a bar before the game, he revealed that "the Italians have been very chatty. We've felt no grievances or had any adverse comments".

Frank Skinner, over with David Baddiel to launch their new video, *More Unseen Fantasy Football*, reckoned that the feel-good factor partly stemmed from Euro 96, which "gave the feeling that maybe the door on football hooliganism had been closed. It was OK for normal

nice people to go to football". The good humour was carried over into the stadium where Della Smith and Ernest Saunders rubbed shoulders with cut-outs of Ginger Spice. People had clearly come to party.

The trouble between English fans and Italian police appeared to be forgotten by the second half when, using the perspex barriers, the English supporters drowned out their hosts with a 10-minute version of theme from *The Dam Busters*.

Even as we were marched back into the city, the sound of "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" rang out. It was a fitting coda to a very warm Roman holiday.

— James Rampton

Art world split over the Burrell legacy

The director of Glasgow Museums is arguing before a Parliamentary Commission that the city's famous Burrell Collection should no longer be tied to its donor's dying wishes. David Lister, Arts News Editor, says there will be a dramatic twist at the hearing tomorrow which carries enormous implications for many other top art collections.

Should the wishes of the person who leaves treasures to a museum or art gallery be sacrosanct? Sir William Burrell insisted that the collection be bequeathed should never be loaned abroad. Now the art world is being split by an attempt by Julian Spalding, director of Glasgow Museums and head of the Burrell Collection, to overturn that instruction. Mr Spalding wants to loan the

Burrell collection, receive loans in return, and thereby be able to join the lucrative international exhibitions circuit. He also argues that Sir William, though a shipowner, was obsessive about the dangers of sea travel (he decreed that his collection could be lent, but only in Britain as it must never travel over water).

Not only is travel much safer now, but developments such as the Channel tunnel, have altered the nature of international transportation of art. Mr Spalding has told the commission that modern storage and transport methods mean Sir William's objections are outdated and if he were alive today he would approve foreign loans.

Mr Spalding is being supported by Glasgow city council, but opposed by his own trustees (who he accuses of being a self-perpetuating clique who appoint themselves and deliberate in private). The trustees called in the commissioners earlier this month because Mr Spalding's changes will require new laws. Also publicly opposed to Mr

Spalding are the great and the good in the art world, including Neil MacGregor, the director of the National Gallery, who maintains the need to respect the wishes of benefactors once they have been agreed by trustees.

Yet tomorrow will see a dramatic twist when Mr MacGregor will be brought to give evidence for Glasgow Council. Mr MacGregor, who describes the case as a "huge significant issue for galleries and museums", has not changed his mind. But he will give details about a clause in the 1992 Museums and Galleries Act, which, unknown even to many closely involved in the field, allows national museums to go against the wishes of benefactors after a period of 50 years.

It is understood that Glasgow and Mr Spalding will argue that the Burrell is a national collection - an argument likely to carry some force, as Liverpool's art galleries are deemed to be national - and therefore should be subject to the 50-year rule. Sir William died in 1958, but made his bequest in 1944.



The Burrell Collection: Dilemma over instructions Photograph: Colin McPherson

The Burrell Collection, housed in a £20m building in 300 acres of parkland, has a display of 8,000 works, including antiquities, jades, bronzes, medieval tapestries, and paintings by Cezanne and Rembrandt. The commissioners holding the hearings are Lord Charles Lyell (chairman), Viscount

Dunrossil, and the Earls of Mar and Kellie and Balfour - a make-up which also causing comment. One senior art world source commented: "It is utterly bizarre that one of the most important issues facing museums and art galleries is effectively being decided by Scottish earls of whom we have barely heard."

David Barrie, director of the National Art Collections Fund, said yesterday: "This is a major test case and will cause extensive ripples. If Glasgow wins it will send out shock waves and will discourage many potential donors." Requests often come with perverse instructions. Lady Wallace, for example, left the magnificent Wallace Collection in London with an instruction that no item should ever be exhibited outside the collection. Rubens painted two landscapes designed to be hung together: one is in the Wallace Collection, the other in the National Gallery, but never the twain shall meet. The hearing in Glasgow is expected to last several more days.

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Revealed: Scandal of the pensions hole created for police and fire officers

The massive and growing cost of police, fire and council pensions was hidden under the Tories. David Walker discloses that two forthcoming reports will confront taxpayers with the dizzy scale of pensions commitments made in their name.

Up to 25 pence of every pound of public money earmarked for fighting crime and protecting property against fire will soon be spent on the pensions of retired police and fire officers. That figure could rise to 50 per cent unless there are drastic and immediate reforms, say experts. The money is being spent on meeting the gap between what current staff pay in contributions and payments in retired officers. A report from a joint Home Office Treasury working party, delayed by the previous gov-

ernment, is due shortly, warning that even radical reforms could take 20 years to realise any savings. In the meantime "pay as you go" pensions will consume even greater proportions of fire and police budgets. Police pension arrangements have become a scandal. The Local Government Management Board told the Home Office three years ago that ill health is regularly used "as a convenient if expensive way to dismiss inefficient officers by the back door". Since police officers

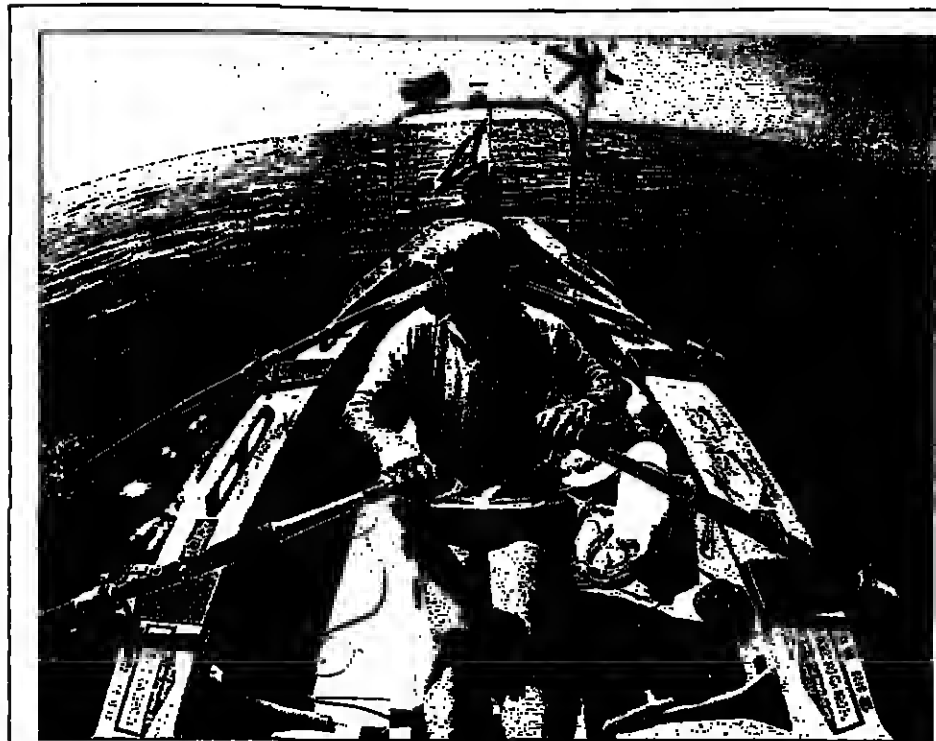
qualify for bigger lump sums than other public servants, this often means the worse an officer the sooner they end up with more money. The Association of Chief Police Officers has admitted that "the current position is that most of the people we are dealing with, suspected of corruption or dishonesty, are immediately going sick". Most qualify for a pension. In the fire service, the pathway to a golden future is to fail its stiff fitness tests, which im-

mediately qualifies someone for ill health retirement, usually on full pension. In theory the position of social workers, road sweepers and other council staff is better since they pay into proper pension funds. But a report from the Audit Commission to be published shortly will announce that council pension funds are committed to paying out more than their assets are worth and will recommend drastic restrictions on the rights of officials to take early retirement.

As few as a fifth of council staff reach the statutory retirement age. The rest retire early or leave with pension rights. The Commission will complain that retirement has been used as a more expensive substitute for redundancy. But the arithmetic is worst in the fire service. Some 20 pence in every pound spent on fire protection in the capital goes on the pensions "gap". Experts fear it will widen leading to cuts in front-line staff, engines and stations. Some fear a boom

in retirements as the prospect grows that rules on ill-health retirement will be tightened. In some areas, such as London, there are already more retired fire officers than serving employees. Current staff pay 11 per cent of salary in pensions contributions but this is nowhere near enough to pay for the pensions of retired fire staff which consume £53m of its £276m budget. Tony Ritchie, Labour leader of the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority, warned re-

cently said: "We may move towards being more a pensions authority than a fire authority." The consequences of generous arrangements in the public service are only now being realised. The boom in fire service recruitment in the Seventies will shortly produce a large number of retirements. The law prevents changes being made to pension expectations of staff currently in post. Even if police and fire pensions were reorganised it would take decades to see any savings.



Life on the ocean waves: David and Nadia Rice preparing for the 3,000-mile Atlantic race from Tenerife to Barbados, which began yesterday. Photograph: Mark Pepper

Blair to shake hands with Sinn Fein chiefs

Tony Blair will become the first British prime minister of the modern era to formally shake hands with republican leaders when he meets Sinn Fein's president, Gerry Adams, at the multi-party talks in Belfast today. Although only 10 minutes have been set aside for the encounter the arrangements appear to have been the subject of intense and careful thought on the Government's part.

Mr Blair and Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, have been concerned to take into account both republican and Unionist sensitivities in settling the details of the meeting. It comes as the eight parties involved in the talks are poised to get down to detailed discussion on the political future. Negotiations were launched last week with opening statements from the parties, who are today scheduled to open detailed discussions on Northern Ireland's internal administration.

The Prime Minister's appearance at the Stormont talks will be part of a wider visit to Belfast and other parts of Northern Ireland during which he is scheduled to meet workers, industrialists, members of the security forces and others. In deference to Unionist concerns the Blair-Adams handshake is to take place within the talks complex and hence behind closed doors. The Government is insisting that no newspaper or television cameras will be allowed to record the event.

During a two-hour stay Mr Blair will spend 10 minutes in turn with three-member delegations from each of the parties represented. This format is also intended to satisfy Sinn Fein's insistence that they have the right to be treated equally with the various other parties. — David McKittrick, Ireland Correspondent

Dilemma for Diana coroner

The coroner who is expected to hold an inquest into the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, spoke yesterday of his limited powers to gather evidence about the precise circumstances of the tragedy. Dr John Burton, Coroner of the Queen's Household, expressed his frustration at having no authority to call witnesses from abroad and said he would have to rely on a report from French police about August's death crash. The coroner branded it a "judicious situation". He said: "If Dodi and Diana had been buried in France there would be no inquest. It is purely the fact that they were brought back to England."

Safeway kids wear Calvin Klein

Secretly acquired stocks of Calvin Klein children's clothes will go on sale at Safeway today at up to half their usual price. It is the first time the designer children's wear, usually seen in up-market boutiques and department stores, has been offered in a supermarket. The cheaper prices are possible because the clothes have been bought from an unnamed third party rather than direct from the manufacturers.

Doctors face misconduct case

Three doctors charged with misconduct will appear in front of a disciplinary hearing today, billed as the most important medical inquiry of the decade. Heart surgeons James Wisheart — who is now retired — and Janardan Dhasmana, and Dr John Roylance, the former chief executive of United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust, will appear before the General Medical Council's disciplinary committee on charges relating to heart surgery in children. The case is expected to last four months. All the doctors deny charges of misconduct.

One ticket scoops jackpot

One ticket-holder won the National Lottery jackpot of £8,548,888. Winning numbers were 15, 17, 18, 27, 34, and 40. The bonus 29.



Lesson in life: Edna O'Brien meets the Cheltenham Literary Festival

Cheltenham learns secret of a night with the Irish

The lights were dimmed, voices fell, all eyes concentrating on the figure strolling regally on to the stage. Wearing leopard print to compliment her flame bouffant, looking every bit the megastar, Hollywood, in the form of Edna O'Brien, had arrived.

The good ladies and gentlemen of the audience were visibly taken aback. Their town hall is playing host to the 48th Cheltenham Literary Festival and, in a town where you risk being stoned for not wearing Laura Ashley, they just don't make women like Edna.

She wooed them, stretched her long languorous legs out at them, said the F-word while smiling at them and caused the men to look at their 65-year-old wives and ask "Why?" The answer is it's an Irish thing and that's what Edna and dozens of other writers were here to celebrate — the opening weekend is dedicated to all things Irish.

For the ill-prepared it can come as a little bit of a shock. Perhaps right in the middle of the afternoon's Irish cabaret on the promenade was not the best place for the Army to mount their annual recruitment drive.

At the teatime discussion, CHELTENHAM LITERARY FESTIVAL SPONSORED BY THE INDEPENDENT

"Irish Voices", Kate O'Riordan had read excerpts from her new novel, *The Boy in the Moon*, where she suggests that they way to spice up a dead marriage is to introduce a healthy bout of anal sex. At which point a woman in the front row who thought she was popping in for a lit-

tle light relief after doing her early Christmas shopping, coughed, gathered up her bags and promptly walked out. But they kept coming. That evening, by the time Edna had finished with them, they were off, down the corridor, on a buzz bigger than HRT, to jig-on-down to Deirdre Cunningham's Celtic Band. At 11pm, when the poet Rita Ann Higgins took the stage, the great burghers of Cheltenham were barely distinguishable from the dyed in the wool Irish literati. They were buying for more, she called them thickos and forgot her words. "Shit", she stammered, "Claron Carson said to me: 'Drink wine, there's no alcohol in wine'." And they cried like banshees, holding their Chardonnay fuelled glasses aloft, living proof that Claron Carson doesn't know what he is talking about. Cheltenham is rocking. William Hague should come on down.

Mental patients commit a murder every two weeks

Mental patients released from hospital have committed 104 murders since 1992, an average of one every two weeks, says a survey.

Carried out by the Zito Trust — set up by Jayne Zito after her husband was killed by a man with schizophrenia — the survey showed these are not "rare tragic events".

More than half the killings were carried out by patients who had failed to take prescribed medication or failed to co-operate in their treatment. At least 40 per cent have been committed by people unknown to their victims.

So far nearly 40 cases have had reports completed although the findings have not always been published.

The 104 include cases such as that of Darren Carr, who killed the two children he minded and their mother, Anthony Smith, who killed his mother half brother, and Christopher Clunis, who killed Jonathan Zito, a

stranger, in a Tube station. "I feel very cynical about the response that has taken place since Jonathan's death," Mrs Zito told BBC's *Panorama*. "The professionals are not looking at the extent of problems faced by people being discharged into the community. I'm sick of hearing people say 'these rare tragic events'."

The survey's findings mirror the Boyd report in 1994 which found there had been 34 homicides in 18 months. The report denied the "common perception" that mentally ill people are likely to behave violently and says that in the context of 600 to 700 killings a year, homicide by psychiatrically ill people is "very rare indeed".

Under legislation passed after the Zito case, every released patient must have a "care keyworker". They must also have a plan for their care and a home to go to.

But there are fears that

people are not always getting the care that they need. Dr Martin Deahl, a consultant psychiatrist at the Homerton Hospital, in east London, tells the programme: "There are people walking around who I think are potentially dangerous. When a serious offence is committed the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end because I just pray to God it's not one of mine."

Dr Deahl called for it to be made easier to section people and bring them into hospital and in some case to ensure that patients continue their medication after release to forcibly inject them.

"If we are going to let people out into the community... there has to be some increased risk. We cannot eliminate this risk, all we can do is keep that risk to a minimum," he added. ●*Panorama*; BBC1, 10pm tonight.

— Glenda Cooper

Blair faces embarrassing isolation as Tory and Shadow Cabinet enthusiasm for Millennium Dome fades

Senior Conservatives yesterday indicated that the Opposition is about to withdraw support from the Millennium Dome project — which was initiated by the last government.

While official sources said it was "early days" and "a grotesque exaggeration" to

say that the party was about to drop bipartisan support for the Greenwich scheme, other, more authoritative sources, suggested that support had already been withdrawn and it was only a matter of time before an outright, public attack was launched. Given that Tony Blair took the decision

to go ahead with the project against the advice of many of his senior ministers, insisting that the Government had to mark the Millennium with a high-profile project, the Tory U-turn could leave the Prime Minister embarrassingly isolated if the scheme goes wrong. The current plan is for a dome that

would cost about £750m, with much of the funding coming from the lottery.

But many Labour MPs feel that the dome money would be much better spent on Millennium projects in their own constituencies, with investment in education and health a priority.

The Independent has been told that soundings have been taken among members of the Shadow Cabinet, and there are few signs of any enthusiasm for continuing support.

"I wouldn't say that anyone is more than lukewarm at best," one source said, "apart

from a solitary figure in an arborescent in Northamptonshire" — a reference to Michael Heseltine, the former Deputy Prime Minister, who was appointed a Millennium Commissioner by Mr Blair soon after the election.

— Anthony Bevens

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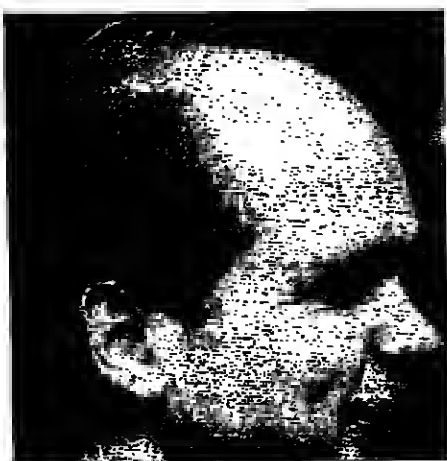
Those folk at British Gas are certainly a dog's best friend. From January 12th, they're offering significantly reduced prices right across the country. Millions of customers will save around 9% on an average bill. Some could even save as much as 26%.* All they ask is that you pay promptly and they'll make the changes automatically. Mind you, certain things British Gas will never reduce: their levels of safety, service and customer care (notably, their nationwide help and advice). In short then, you'll be getting better value for money than ever. Meantime, I look forward to the family putting more roasts on the menu.

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Hedgehog Hague goes foraging for a stronger Tory image

Focus group research is being used to help guide William Hague's leadership of the Conservative Party. Anthony Bevis, Political Editor, watches Tory scorn for Labour's techniques turn to a more flattering imitation.



Sore point: William Hague was seen by voters as a hedgehog, while Tony Blair was seen as a lion

Mr Hague is a hedgehog, a spiky, slow and rather flea-ridden creature with a reputation for getting crushed in the middle of country roads, according to focus group work for the Conservatives before last week's party conference.

But party advisers hope that the basic research - with more to follow soon - will show Mr Hague making a good mark on public perceptions.

They hope that with careful guidance he can be turned from one of the least-known Conservative leaders into a star, outshining John Major, and even Margaret

Thatcher, in terms of personal appeal.

According to the research, conducted by ICM with focus groups in Leeds, Slough and Sutton Coldfield, Tony Blair was seen as a man of action, and a decent family man - a "lion" of a leader.

When the panels were asked what animal Mr Hague reminded them of, they

variously came up with answers like the hedgehog or the pussycat. The most flattering comparison was with a Yorkshire terrier, with plenty of bark.

But a Tory source told *The Independent* yesterday that the findings were unsurprising, given the fact that most people did not know a thing about the leader.



reported to have told ICM: "I don't think of him as a weasel or rodent now."

That can only get better, with last week's conference coverage certain to have improved his overall ratings.

The fact that the Tories are using focus groups will be seen as another leaf taken from Labour's book - following on from the new caring, sharing image that Mr Hague tried to create at Blackpool.

But Blackpool has also left continuing tensions within the Tory ranks. Mr Hague was warned yesterday that he could face severe difficulties if he tried to ditch his compromise on the single currency - saying that the Tories would remain opposed "for the foreseeable future".

There have been repeated hints that Mr Hague is planning to return to the 10-year embargo of the euro on which he contested the leadership election in July, even if that meant the shadow cabinet resignation of pro-Europeans like David Curry, the agriculture spokesman. If Mr Curry were forced out, he could be followed by other frontbenchers.

"They tend to project on to him all the character flaws they see in the Conservative Party, that caused them to kick us out of office so vigorously."

When the panel members were shown videos of Mr Hague questioning Mr Blair in the Commons, they tended to perform a somersault. One panel member is

Call for curbs on power of utilities

Regulation of the privatised utilities should be overhauled to give more protection to the poor and safeguard the environment, the National Consumer Council says today. In its response to the Government's review of utility regulation, the council argues that responsibility for issues such as poverty should be taken out of the hands of individual industry regulators and placed directly with ministers.

The NCC says that the present system of regulation is failing the most vulnerable in society. For instance, gas and electricity suppliers are able to penalise the poorest customers by imposing higher charges on those who do not pay by direct debit or in advance.

The submission calls for new and independent consumer bodies for the water, telephone and electricity industries along the lines of the Gas Consumers' Council and the replacement of single regulators with regulatory panels or commissions.

The submission also says there is a case for merging the gas and electricity regulators into one body.

— Michael Harrison

More low-paid workers claiming Family Credit

One-fifth of Britons in work are on pay of less than two-thirds of typical hourly earnings and, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, women are much more likely than men to be in low-paid jobs. About one in eight of the people in badly-paying jobs also live in poor households.

In a report published today, researchers show that the take-up of in-work benefits like Family Credit has increased rapidly, with women making up the majority of recipients. The report, by Jane Millar, Martin Kemp and Steven Webb, now a Liberal Democrat MP, concludes that a combination of a more generous Family Credit for poor families with school-age children and a minimum wage would make a significant dent in poverty.

Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security, welcomed the study. "It highlights the need to strike the right balance between wage protection and in-work benefits," she said.

The report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation coincides with a paper in the forthcoming issue of the *Economic Journal* which shows that Family Credit strongly encourages lone mothers to work. Lone mothers often have little work experience and poor educational qualifications, and are only offered badly paid jobs. The low wages mean they have little incentive to accept a job and lose other benefits. The research indicates that Family Credit can overcome this, and has a big impact on the take-up of work by lone parents.

— Diane Coyle

Poor bank on credit unions

The Government is being urged to incorporate legislation that would make it easier to establish credit unions in its forthcoming shake-up of financial regulation. In a report out today the New Economics Foundation, an independent think tank, says that up to a quarter of adults in the United Kingdom do not have access to basic financial services like a bank account. This excludes people from work, as most salaries are now paid into a bank account, and exposes poor households to loan sharks because they cannot take out bank loans.

The report argues that there is a strong case for a new law encouraging the small but fast-growing credit union movement. There are now almost 600 of these local deposit-taking bodies, often in inner-city areas or outlying council estates, up from under 50 ten years ago. They serve people whom the high street banks are unwilling or unable to provide with accounts.

The study says that with technical assistance and a streamlined regulatory framework, these credit unions could form the kernel of a community banking movement as healthy as that in the United States - where "community development credit unions" were born out of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and serve mainly ethnic minority groups in the big cities.

Civil Service attacked over lack of Asian staff

The small number of Asians in the civil service and particularly in the higher ranks is a cause for "national shame", a Labour MP has claimed.

Keith Vaz, MP for Leicester East, who today publishes a report, "The Glass Ceiling - Asian Representation in the Civil Service", said his findings belied Britain's claim to be a non-racial society.

Mr Vaz said the report was particularly disturbing coming in the wake of Lord Tebbit's comments on the "divisive" influence of multi-culturalism. "The figures make disturbing reading," he said.

The report found the percentage of Asians in the civil service, at 2.03 per cent, is 1.5 per cent lower than the overall proportion of Asians in Britain. Asians are concentrated in the lower grades; only a handful are in the senior civil service, all in the lower paybands; and Asians are particularly poorly represented in the Foreign Office and MoD.

The report, based on answers to parliamentary questions, recommends that all government departments and agencies draw up action plans to ensure staff become representative of the ethnic groups in society.

DAILY POEM

Sonnet 29

By William Shakespeare

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth sing's hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

The Arden Shakespeare series has just issued a new edition of the *Sonnets* (Thomas Nelson, £7.99). The editor, Katherine Duncan-Jones, explores the poems' "homosexual and misogynistic nature" in her notes and critical introduction.

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Army needs black faces in the guards

The Ministry of Defence will today announce a drive to recruit more members of the ethnic minorities and admit that the armed forces have got it wrong over racism in the past. Michael Streeter previews a new policy of zero tolerance.

The message from army chiefs remains the same: Your Country Still Needs You. From this morning, however, the old First World War slogan will be aimed primarily at black and Asian recruits, with the old visage of Lord Kitchener replaced by the image of a - rare - serving black officer.

The poster will be part of a television and newspaper advertisement campaign, created by Saatchi and Saatchi, which will also feature the Guards Division under the title "The Changing of the Guard".

The launch of a new Equal Opportunities Plan will be accompanied by an admission that the Army has got its handling of racism wrong. In recent years there have been a string of well-publicised cases where young black recruits have been subjected to appalling racial slurs and physical attacks.

As one senior officer put it: "We need to own up to the fact that we have got it wrong in the past." Accordingly, the head of the Army, General Sir Roger

Wheeler will "draw a line in the sand" today and urge all his troops to cross it with him. In a message directed as much at those in the Army as potential recruits, he will claim that by joining forces they can set new standards in race relations.

Equally, those who refuse to embrace the new approach will be identified and dealt with as part of the problem. To back up this aim, there will be special full-time squads, probably Royal Military Police, whose job will be to monitor and remove racial harassment. Critics will argue that such units will only be effective if all its members are fully committed to the spirit, not just the letter, of the new approach, and have the authority to back their judgement.

There will also be concern that the re-working of the Lord Kitchener poster - a symbol of white, British imperialism - is not ideal to appeal to young blacks and Asians. Apart from the national advertising campaign, recruitment will concentrate on areas with a high percentage of ethnic minorities.

Already exploratory talks are taking place in Newham in east London and Sandwell in the West Midlands, while other areas will be considered in the future.

As part of the scheme, the Army is setting up its first specialist multi-racial Ethnic Minorities Recruiting Team, which will contain representatives from nine different ethnic backgrounds - all of them serving in the Army. In addition, a

long-term programme of activities within local communities is planned to support the overall campaign. Senior officers and officials across the Ministry of Defence are embarrassed that just 1.04 per cent of military personnel come from the ethnic minorities.

The problem of racism has been most apparent in the more elite units. The Prince of Wales helped to bring concerns into the open when he confided his anxiety about the lack of black faces among the guard at Buckingham Palace.

The Commission for Racial Equality recently warned the MoD to show real commitment to race equality and make substantial progress before next spring or face legal action.



Race victim: Former Grenadier Guard Richard Stokes, the first black soldier to take part in the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, quit the Army after abuse from fellow soldiers

Armed forces win U-turn over gays

The Government is accused of reversing its stated policy by defending the military's ban on homosexuals. Michael Streeter looks at the prospect of an expensive legal battle.

Before the general election Labour made clear their opposition to the ban on gays serving in the armed forces. Now, ministers are believed to have decided to defend a legal action brought by four former service people sacked by the Ministry of Defence for being homosexual.

If true, and the claim was not denied yesterday, the decision will lead to accusations of a U-turn by politicians in the face of opposition by senior military personnel. Many officers still believe that having gays in the service would compromise "combat effectiveness".

The action before the European Court of Human Rights claims that the Government's ban on gays in the services breaches human rights conventions. One of the four litigants, former Royal Navy lieutenant commander Duncan Lustig-Preen, warned yesterday that opposition by ministers could cost million of pounds in compensation, and accused Labour of going back on assurances once in power.

The MoD yesterday denied that its lawyers had formally responded to the court. However, sources did not deny they would be opposing the case.

It was also pointed out that before any changes of policy ministers had maintained they would need to consult with the chiefs of staff to canvass their views - a process that has not yet begun.

The Government faces a second legal front on the same issue. In March a medical naval assistant, Terry Perkins, who was sacked for being gay, won the right to take his case to the European Court of Justice under the EU's equal treatment directive. A ruling is expected late next year.

If defeated on this issue the Government could be landed with a multi-million pound compensation bill for the thousands of gays dismissed from the service in recent years.

In a separate development, ministers have given the go ahead to all members of the military to send their views on the future of the armed forces in confidence to the MoD.

The Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, has extended the same invitation to all MoD civil servants, as part of the strategic defence review. "I am especially keen to hear more from those with the most direct interest in the review - members of the armed forces and civilian staff in the MoD," he said.

'Snob' snub lands officer in court

An army officer who publicly attacked snobbery among his colleagues is likely to face a court martial. Major Eric Joyce, a staff officer in the Adjutant General's Corps, was initially suspended after he wrote an article for the Fabian Society accusing the officer corps of "Victorian-style attitudes".

The article also called for the setting up of an independent professional association for services personnel and an end to the recruitment division between officers and lower ranks. He then further provoked anger among the top brass by speaking publicly again, when specifically told not to - regarded by fellow officers as disobeying orders.

The Ministry of Defence said yesterday that his case was being considered by the Army Prosecution Authority, their equivalent of the Crown Prosecution Service. A spokeswoman said: "The case is still being considered, and no decision has been reached."

However, it is felt that for such an apparent snub to the Army, a court martial is the likely outcome and will take place later this year. Last night it was equally clear that Major Joyce, who is determined to stay in the military, would appeal any adverse outcome to the European Court of Human Rights.

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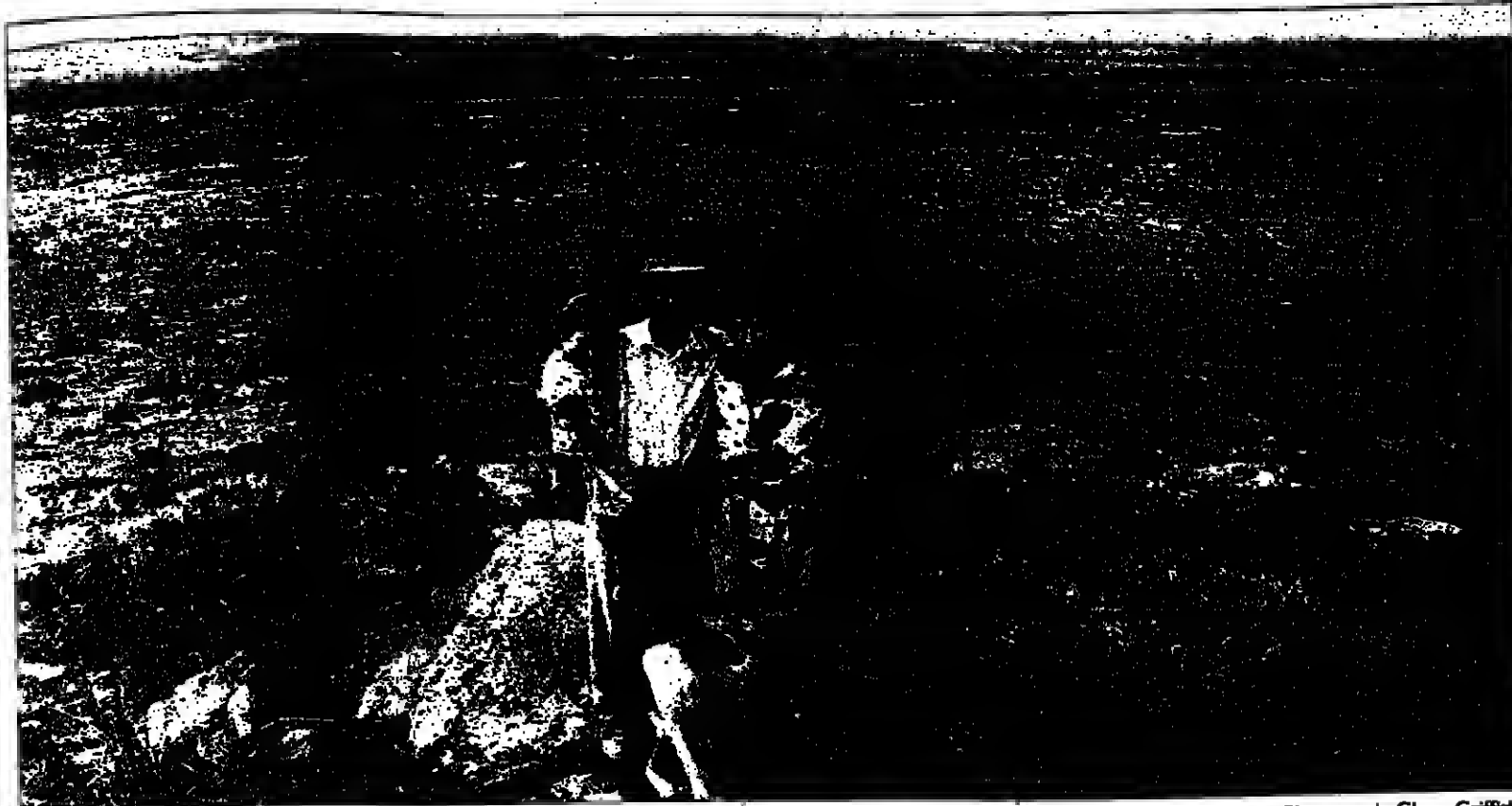
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In crime-ridden South Africa, farming families say their isolation makes them particularly vulnerable

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

South Africa's white farmers under siege

BY MARY BRAID

More than 100 white farmers have been murdered in South Africa over the past two years. Tomorrow their union meets President Nelson Mandela to demand action before farmers take the law into their own hands. But the vigilantism has begun.

Shoot first and shoot last. For months that has been the advice from Dr Pieter Gous, the right-wing president of the Free State Agricultural Union, to white farmers for the handling of trespassers.

After every attack on a

member Mr Gous has threatened farmers would mete out their own rough justice if the government failed to curb the violence and warned that rural vigilante groups would soon be formed similar to those operated by the Muslim anti-drug group, Pagad, against Cape Town's gangsters.

This weekend the farmers took their revenge after the murder of Theo Pieterse, 50, near Bullfontein in the heart of the vast, flat, fertile plains of the Free State. His neighbours, in an area dominated by conservative Boer farmers, tracked down three black male suspects who were found hiding in a nearby water canal. According to Mr Pieterse's workers the men had been around the day before looking for work.

In the "citizens' arrest" that followed one of the suspects died and the two others were seriously hurt. Police are now investigating another murder. Mr Gous has said he regrets the death of the suspect, but claims it reflects the high level of frustration in farming communities.

The FSAU claims Mr Pieterse is the third local white farmer to have been killed by blacks in the province in the past 10 days. Last week, Piet van Eedeo was murdered on his farm at Lindley.

He was killed after returning from a school function with his family. While he parked the car his wife and daughter walked in on waiting assailants. They were tied up and when Mr van Eedeo entered the house he was stabbed in the neck. In another attack a few days earlier a farmer was killed at nearby Heilbroo.

Yesterday Dries Bruwer, Mr Gous's political soulmate from the Transvaal Agricultural Union, said that attacks on farmers had reached "paramilitary proportions". The Transvaal Union claims that, apart from the police, more farmers were being murdered than any other professional group. It says more than 100 farmers have died in 1,000 attacks in the past two years. Most of the victims are over 50 and a high proportion are elderly. Sunday morning, after church, is the perpetrators' favourite hit time.

The attackers' motivation is a matter of dispute. Moderate farm leaders say members are not being specially targeted but are suffering the same crime wave as everyone else. It is their isolation and possession of weapons and vehicles that makes them particularly vulnerable.

While farmers form commando-style self-defence units and drive around in defence force surplus armoured vehicles there is speculation that at least some old scores are being settled between farmers and workers.

But others mutter about a wider conspiracy. "Theft was not the motivation in these attacks," said Johann Neethling, FSAU executive member yesterday, referring to the latest three deaths. "The attackers

stole nothing before they killed."

The right-wing, Afrikaner Conservative Party claims that the murders are part of a campaign to force farmers to give up their land. Mr Neethling believes the killings are taking place because blacks believe whites stole their land. He claims that farmers with right-wing political affiliations were once targets but now any farmer seems to do.

"Blacks don't seem to understand we bought the land," Mr Neethling said. "They can buy land too if they want to."

The government's attempts to strengthen the tenure rights of farm workers has certainly raised the temperature in rural areas where the white man has always been baas and the black man, with few if any choices, his poorly paid worker. That hard reality has long since poisoned relations.

Many farmers are trying to beat the introduction of new legislation to strengthen rural blacks' tenure rights by evicting families from their land.

Some blacks are being forced off land they have occupied for decades. Sometimes a farmer removes the roof from a black home to encourage a family on its way.

When Martin Paters, 21, was shot dead last month police speculated that he might have been mistaken for a local farmer who had just chased several families from his land.

The agricultural unions, which oppose the new legisla-



Theo Pieterse: Neighbours tracked three suspects

Photograph: Die Volksblad

tion on the grounds that it ignores the hard economic realities of farming, say the government is creating false impressions among blacks about property ownership and redistribution of wealth.

Whatever the reasons for it, the random violence has raised white fear in some areas to hysterical proportions. Last week an agitated white farmer phoned a national radio chat show from KwaZulu Natal to ask the government to introduce unemployment benefits for blacks.

The trouble he insisted was that rural poverty and unemployment was worsening and white farmers were being targeted by desperate blacks. "They are going to kill us because they have nothing," he warned.

The South African Agricultural Union is pushing for a more punitive approach. Last week it demanded that the African National Congress reinstate the death penalty. That is the message its leaders will deliver tomorrow when they meet President Mandela to discuss the crisis.

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Schools fret over status as ministers usher in new order

As consultation on government proposals to reorganise schools comes to an end, teachers, governors and local authorities are unhappy. Far from ending rows about the structure of education, they may simply lead to yet more instability and confusion for parents, writes Judith Judd, Education Editor.

"Standards not structures." Of all the catch-phrases coined by the Government about education, few make more sense.

For more than 30 years, politicians have talked obsessively of the merits of grammars and comprehensives. For 10, they have argued about the right of schools to opt out of local authority control.

The education White Paper says that schools in the future will be able to choose to belong to one of three categories, foundation, aided or community but insists: "We do not want the mechanisms for choosing to distract attention from the main purpose of raising standards and we assume that the great majority of schools will wish to choose a category which is as close as possible to their existing status."

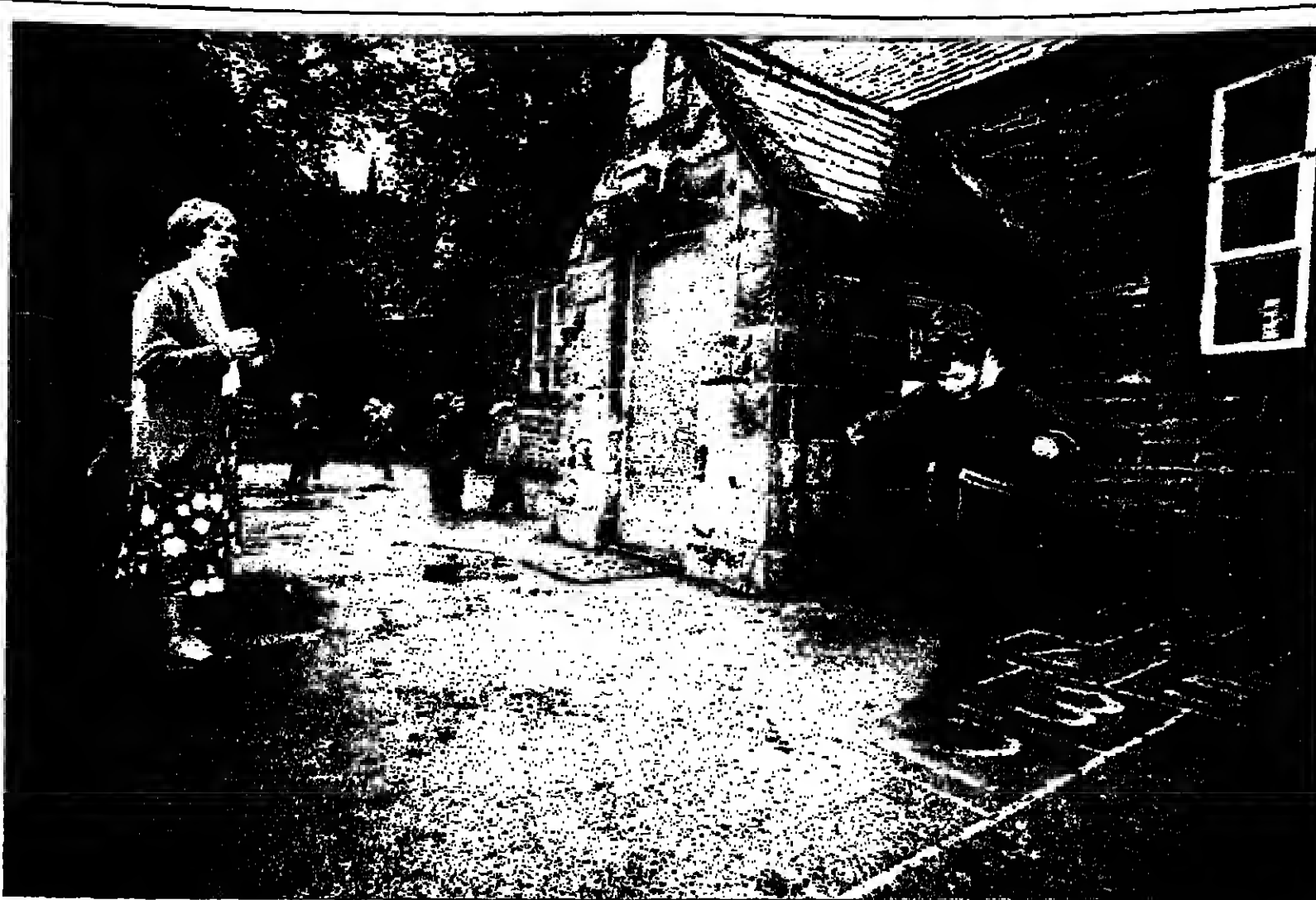
But the consultation on the paper which ended last week shows that the Government's good intentions may already be running into difficulties and that the English habit of fretting about how schools are organised is proving hard to kick. Regional conferences on the paper have come back repeatedly to the question of structures.

The proposals envisage that the 1,000 or so opted-out schools will become foundation schools, running their own admissions, owning their premises and employing their staff. Church schools would become aided and retain similar powers over admissions and staff and local authority schools would become community with the authority employing staff and dealing with admissions. Admissions for foundation and aided schools, crucial to parents' hopes of securing the right school place for their child, will be decided in consultation with the local authority with an independent adjudicator to sort out disputes.

Heads, governors and local bureaucrats fear that the plans will perpetuate a pecking order of schools with foundation at the top and community at the bottom. And they worry that parental confusions over admissions will persist as some schools devise their own, different policies and pick the pupils they want.

Already there are signs that both these worries may mean that schools will refuse to slot neatly into the category prescribed for them by the Government. Instead of confining the structures issue to the backburner, the White Paper may unleash a new spell of instability as governors and parents debate where their best interests lie.

Take foundation status. Some local authority secondary schools which voted against grant-maintained status under the previous government may go for the new category. Politically, they feel, foundation



Elton C of E primary in the Peak District where governors face more work and responsibility under the Government's restructuring plans

Volunteers resist conflict of church and state

A football carelessly kicked from the playground of Elton Church of England Primary School, high in the Derbyshire Peak District, would land among the ancient gravestones of the churchyard next door. Separated by no more than three feet of dry stone wall, All Saints' Church and the tiny 32-pupil primary could not huddle much closer against the raw Pennine winds if they tried.

Both church and school, linked since the stone schoolhouse was built by £600 public subscription in 1862, like it that way. Elton is voluntary-controlled - part of that little-understood category of schools

whose buildings are owned by the diocese but, unlike those of their voluntary-aided neighbours, are maintained by the local education authority.

Under proposals in the Government's White Paper, however, voluntary controlled schools are expected to move to a "foundation" category, created primarily to accommodate grant-maintained schools. The change would mean looser links with LEAs and more responsibility for governors over matters such as staff and admissions.

Elton's head, Jenny Newton, and governing body have no desire for such a switch. After vot-

ing repeatedly each year against any move towards opting out, governors resent being huddled into the same category as grant-maintained schools.

The tough demands on the governing body would, they feel, become too onerous to place on a group of volunteers under foundation status. Mick Patterson, chairman of governors and a church warden at All Saints', is concerned that a school with just two full-time teachers could not afford mistaken appointments made by inexperienced governors. And, in a village of only 450 people, would enough volunteers be found to take on the governing

burden? "In truth, parents really only want to be involved enough in school to be sure their children are getting a good education," Mr Patterson says. "They do not want to be giving up hours of free time helping run things themselves."

The head is concerned that handing governing bodies more control over admissions could open the way to increased selection. Mrs Newton said: "Our relative isolation means we take children from the surrounding area, but oversubscribed schools ... may be tempted to pick and choose."

One alternative would be to take on aided status. But Elton

has rejected that option amid concerns that it would be unable to find the resources needed to contribute at least 15 per cent towards capital spending.

All in all, Elton and Derbyshire's 78 other voluntary controlled schools agree, they would much rather shake off intervention from Westminster and stay as they are, cootenedly on good terms with both diocese and LEA. "They want to put us all neatly into new boxes, with no little quirks, but the fact is we are all different," says Mr Patterson. "I would hold up our superb Ofsted report and say 'improve on that'."

— Lucy Ward

untary-controlled schools are also indignant about the proposal that they should take foundation status. These are church foundations so the church owns the buildings but they are maintained by the local education authority, unlike voluntary-aided schools which manage their own buildings and contribute 15 per cent towards the cost of their maintenance.

David Barton, chairman of governors at voluntary-controlled Isis middle school in Oxford, said: "A lot of voluntary controlled schools are unhappy about being put into the same category as grant-maintained schools when they have voted year after year against grant-maintained status."

They objected to the idea that they should control their own admissions partly because they believed it encouraged covert selection of pupils. "It's only too easy once you get control over admissions to weed out those families you don't want. There is also an objection to the amount of work it will produce."

The schools would prefer to remain as they are but, if the Government's proposals remain unchanged, some are likely to go for community status. A few may opt to become voluntary-aided.

Faced with the prospect of yet more disruption, some local authorities are digging in their heels. They believe that the only point of foundation status is to create a slightly less uneasy haven for former grant-maintained schools.

Though the Local Government Association has given the idea of foundation schools its grudging approval, 16 local authorities in the South-west have written to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, saying that the 95 per cent of schools which have not become grant-maintained should remain as they are. In particular, they fear that the proposals will fail to end the admissions free-for-all.

Labour local education authorities in London have voted that foundation status should go, that grant-maintained schools should return to the authority and there should be a moratorium on further changes of school status.

There is no sign that ministers intend to give in. National admissions guidelines, they argue, will ensure that former grant-maintained schools do not continue to pick the strong and reject the weak. One insider said: "Foundation schools were not in the manifesto but they are being treated as if they were."

Mr Blunkett told a London conference on the White Paper: "It is a pity that we have had to pick up the issue of structures but we are left with what we have inherited not what we would wish to have inherited. I have to find a way through that so that it does not divert all of us from key tasks."

So far, that has not happened. The trouble with creating different types of school is that people believe the differences will buy advantages. As one local authority official put it: "Why own your own premises unless it gives you an edge over the school down the road. Why be your own admissions authority if it doesn't give you an advantage? And if there is no point in the differences, then why have them?"

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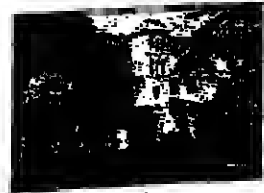
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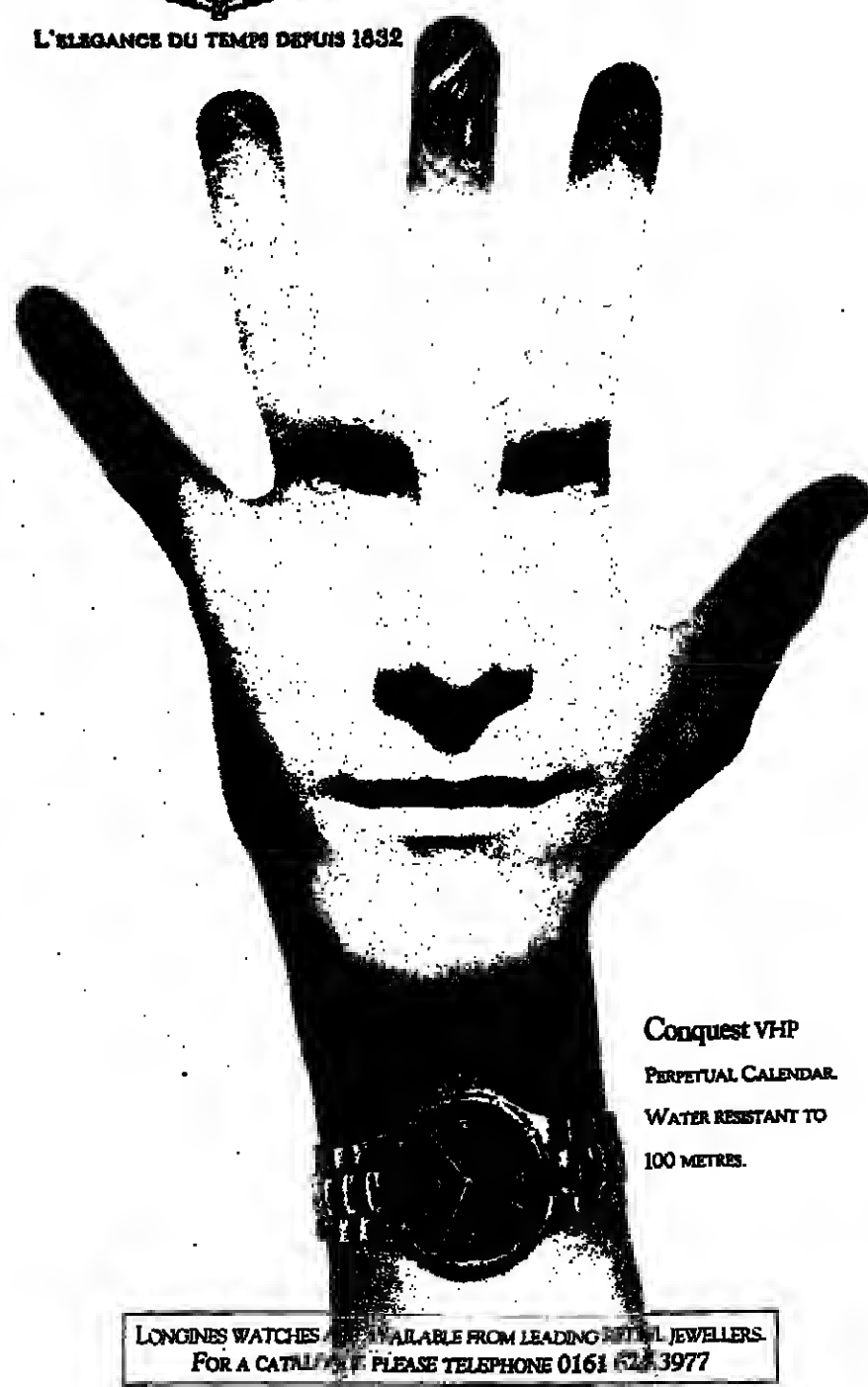
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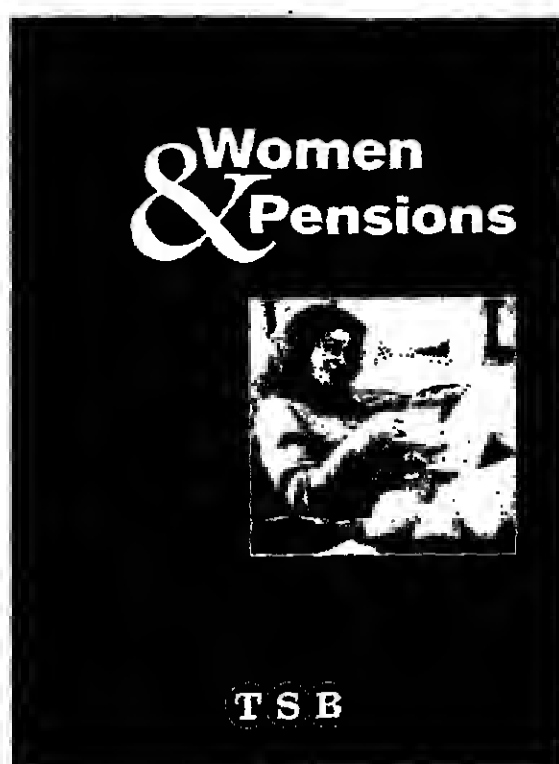
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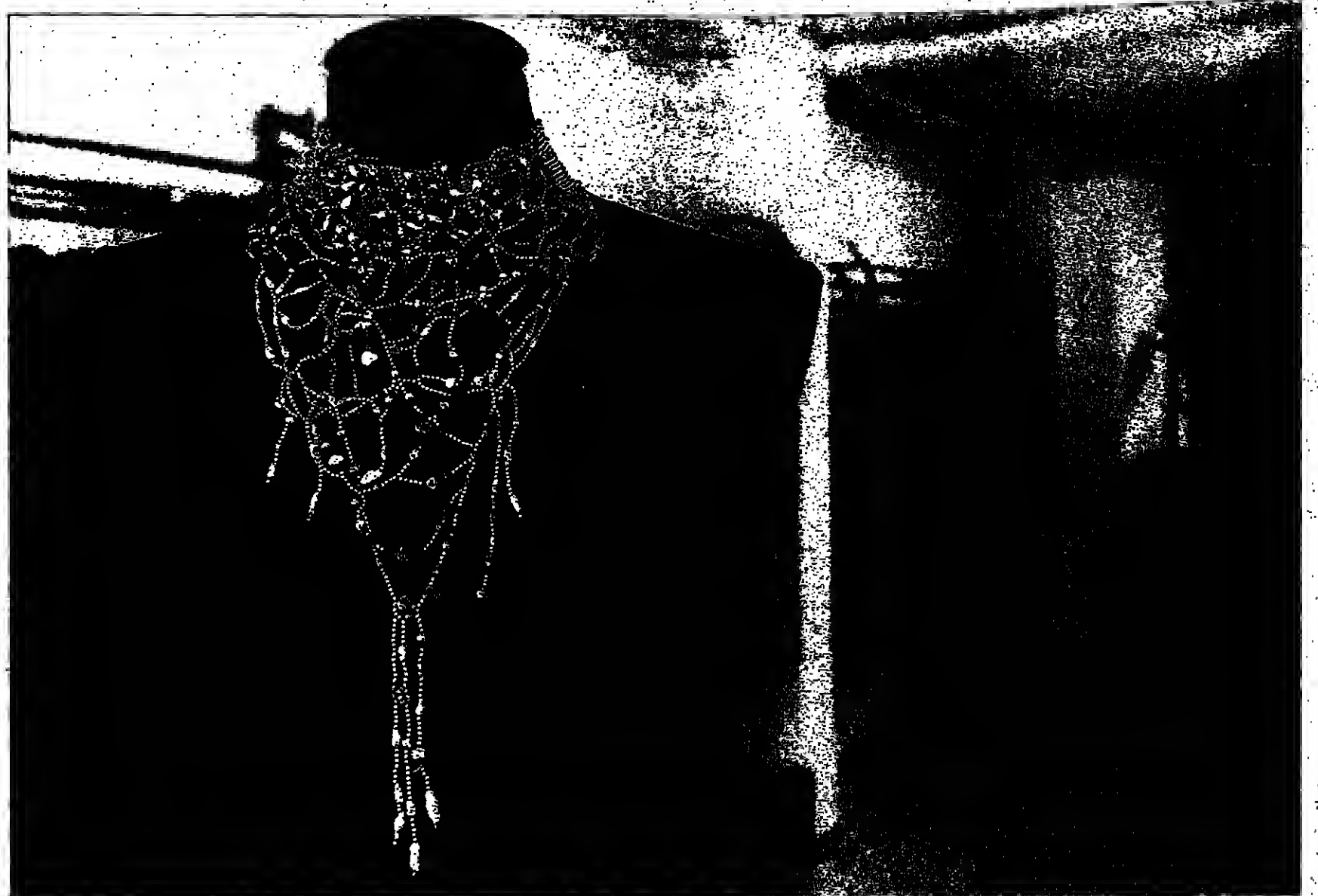
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IN 13/10

Natural instinct for the Next Big Thing – and it happened to be British



Two young friends with hardly any
know-how open a shop. Recipe for
disaster? Not at all. Koh Samui in
Covent Garden, is simply the best –
and friendliest – place to buy young
British designer fashion, says Melonie
Rickey. Photographs by Nicola Kurtz

Four years ago, a couple of disgruntled twenty-something Londoners sat on Camden Lock in North London looking at all the market stalls and wishing they could start one of their own. "Simply so we could be our own boss," explains Paul Sexton, who, at the time, was a sales assistant for French Connection. "Then we realised we would have to stand in the rain and snow," says Talita Zoe, his partner, who at that time was working in an office. Instead of just dreaming of better things, the pair gave up their jobs and went to see the bank manager.

Sexton and Zoe had decided to open a little fashion shop in Covent Garden. It opened in June 1994 on a tiny back street with no passing trade. They called it Koh Samui, and it cost £80 a week to rent. "At first we had absolutely no idea what to put in the shop," says Sexton. "We knew nothing about fashion, except what we liked."

In fact, the pair knew so little about where to find clothes for their shop that Great Portland Street, the traditional centre for London's rag trade, and Commercial Street in the East End, were their first ports of call. They found nothing inspiring, so they went to look for lighting instead.

This is where Lady Luck took a hand. Through a couple of chance meetings Sexton and Zoe came across the designer Stephen Fuller, and through him they met Janice Taylor, a jeweller who was modelling for him. Then, over a pint of beer at the local pub, they met Justin Oh and Anthony Gibson. All were designers just starting out, and Koh Samui became their first stockist.

As buyers, they learned fast. Today Koh Samui is the only designer boutique worth mentioning in connection with young British design talent. The closure of their nearest rival in Covent Garden, Jones Femme, in August helped to raise their status, and though the pair didn't admit it at first, Sexton lets slip with a giggle: "It felt like Christmas."

Jones's owner, Stuart Molloy, closed his womenswear shop because of increased competition from department stores, and returned to his speciality – menswear. The other designer emporiums of any bearing in London – Browns, Fellicano and A La Mode – can sometimes seem a bit rarefied and forbidding to younger customers. Koh Samui has a deliberately non-aggressive sales policy, and is staffed by the owners on most days, along with Jennifer, a laid-back Australian.

The shop on Monmouth Street is a totally refreshing shopping experience, with rails full of the most desirable designer clothes one could hope for. It's a bit like walking into the fashion equivalent of a luxury sweet shop. Radiohead and The Verve emanate from discreet speakers, and there's plenty of natural light to make the space seem airy. Rather than each rail bearing the work of any one designer, as in other boutiques, the

garments are mixed up, as if each rail is someone's very own capsule wardrobe.

On one rail, for example, a YMC fleece sweat-top hangs next to a delicately beaded slip dress by Abe Hamilton, to be followed by a tailored grey flannel trouser suit by Joseph and a cashmere jumper by Clements Ribeiro. At the end hangs a beautiful, slim-line, belted mohair coat by Elspeth Gibson, and underneath are shoes by Patrick Cox and Pollini. This theme cleverly runs throughout the shop, with each individual rail helping the shopper to see finely crafted, special clothes in context with day-to-day pieces. In the main, Joseph own-label provides the basic pieces, but next season Martin Kidman will be added to the line-up.

Sexton, 32, and Zoe, 29, evidently have very good taste in clothes. Their natural instinct for the Next Big Thing helped them enormously in the early days; they were even hestowed with the

NBT tag without knowing it. The pair know it now, of course, but are still modest.

More important than a Next Big Thing tag, as anyone in business knows, is understanding what will sell. When asked which designer label sells the most, the pair shrug, and mutter: "All of them sell well." A department store such as Barneys in New York would pay them a fortune for their "eye".

Koh Samui have recently added a new dimension to their business. From the start the shop had an open door to young designers hoping to gain that all-important first stockist. David Purves was one of them. He walked in from the street with a hanging bag containing his thick, worsted wool jackets, intricately cut coats and low-slung trousers. "With David, we knew straight away," says Sexton. A few weeks later Purves' clothes took pride of place in the Koh Samui window during Fashion Week. Now the shop represents Purves to foreign buyers along with Rudi Danan, a former Alexander McQueen aide who is famous for designing his distressed lace dresses, and Juan Lera, a Spanish, London-based designer known for his exquisite tailoring.

Andrew Groves wasn't as lucky first time round, but Sexton and Zoe are now looking again at his and Tristan Webber's clothes.

Their clientele is pretty cool, too. Helena Christensen, Amber Valetta and Tracey Thorn love Christa Davis, as does Björk, who also buys Hussein Chalayan. Saffron Spanckling from Republica buys Copperwheat Blundell, and Laura Dern buys Abe Hamilton. The celebs are half the story. During my visit a stream of women came in for a spin through the shop, and four expensive items were sold in half-an-hour – on a weekday morning.

Sexton and Zoe caught on to something they didn't even know was happening in 1994 – that British fashion design and its status were about to go through the roof on an international scale. Now they are happy to enjoy their current position as the best designer fashion shop in London – but they won't sit still for long. There are more shops to open, and new designers to discover.

Koh Samui, 65 Monmouth Street, London WC2 (0171-240 4280).



Above: Paul Sexton and Talita Zoe (wearing a lace dress by Rudi Danan), in Koh Samui. The dummy is dressed by David Purves
Main picture: this necklace by Sarah Weiss, available to order at Koh Samui, was requested by an 'Independent' reader who spotted it on our pages. It costs £1,600

TOP THREE: BEADED BITS



Black beaded slip dress, £55, by Warehouse, 19-21 Argyl Street, London W1 and branches nationwide (inquiries, 0171-278 3491)



Beaded handbag, £35, by Lulu Guinness for Debenhams, 334-338 Oxford Street, London W1 and selected branches (inquiries, 0171-408 4488)



Beaded slippers, £20, by Paul Smith, 84-86 Sloane Avenue, London SW3 (inquiries, 0171-379 7133)

FASHION MOMENT



This is a stills image taken from Karen Elson's first TV and cinema advertisement.

The chameleon-like model-of-the-moment who is Karl Lagerfeld's muse has not, however, earned £500,000 for this sojourn in front of the camera. She has been paid nothing. Why? It's all part of Oxfam's drive to capture the 16-to-24-year-old market by showing their clothes in a modern setting. In the advertisement, Elson and a bevy of male and female models do their thing as angels, in a Romeo and Juliet setting and on the catwalk – all set to the Oasis and Chemical Brothers' single, "Setting Sun", released on 1 November.

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PAUL READ

Homosexuals, abortion, feminism, sex before marriage – all are bad. The Tory party used to be OK, but now that's gone bad. He could go on and on, and he frequently does in the right-wing press. Yet he writes compelling novels, and face-to-face he is a strangely tolerant and likeable man

So, here I am, sitting next to Piers Paul Read, the great Catholic novelist – or “the Ayatollah of Catholicism,” as one of his own brothers calls him – on a big, squishy leather sofa in the writers' room at Cheltenham Town Hall. Piers is a famously stern moralist whereas I am a hopelessly cheerful immoralist, the sort who is exceedingly keen on the sins of the flesh, who thinks gay couples are great because they really look after their gardens. In fact, I tell Piers, whenever he writes one of his *Daily Mail* pieces about telly having been given over to “filth” and “sex, sex and more sex,” I always get really cross. If there is so much sex on TV, how come I never get to see any of it? Whenever I turn it on, it seems to be vets, vets and more vets, and never even vets and sex, which would, in my opinion, go a long way to making *Animal Hospital* a great deal more lively. Piers, of course, disagrees.

“But didn't you see the opening episode of *Dance To the Music of Time*?” he cries. “It began with a naked girl opening a door. A naked girl!” Well, I say, some people think naked women a very fine and beautiful thing. “Yes. But there's a place for it. And that was not the place. There wasn't even a good reason for it.” I think, at some level, Piers might be rather frightened of women. And sex. In his latest novel, *Knights of the Cross*, a naked woman is described as having a pubic region like a tarantula. This is not the friendliest of descriptions, I am sure you'll agree. Although, that said, *Knights of the Cross* is a very good book.

Although Piers Paul Read has written 13 novels he is still, probably, best known for *Alive* – his non-fiction account of the Andes air crash survivors – and those regular, *Daily Mail* right-wing rants. He is called upon mostly, he says, when Paul Johnson is unavailable. “In fact,” he says, “I always know when Paul's gone away, because my phone starts to ring.” *Alive* was an international best seller. The *Daily Mail* pieces are consolingly well paid. They have given him his big house in Holland Park and, probably, whatever fame he has. This is a shame, I think, because his novels (*The Upsart*, *The Free Frenchman*, *A Married Man*) should be what he is best-known for.

Knights of the Cross is about a bloke called Michael Latham, an employee at the BBC's monitoring unit in Caversham, who is both a divorcee and a great disappointment to himself. To cut a very complicated story short, he has to take on the identity of a Russian priest, and infiltrate the Knights of the Cross, a sinister, Catholic, charitable order, to investigate the death of someone he once knew. Of course, the book is dominated by the brooding presence of God, and the ending is not so much an ending as an epiphany. Through taking on the identity of a priest, Michael finds God and, as a consequence, his own identity.

The fact Piers can make this a thoroughly gripping read is a tribute to his narrative panache, his cool prose and his skill at using his beliefs to serve his characters, rather than vice versa, and killing them stone dead. Piers is not just a writer who happens to be Catholic like, say, David Lodge or William Trevor. He is very much a Catholic Writer, one who even, at times, out-Graham Greenes Graham Greene. He is not, as it happens, a great admirer of Greene. His Catholicism was, he argues, quite bogus. “The Catholic Church stands for family, marriage, fidelity, children. He stood for affairs, mistresses, abandoning children.” He used to be very friendly with Martin Amis until Martin left his wife for someone else. He won't have anything to do with him now. He is a man of total moral

certitude, the sort of man who would pick Anne Widdecombe from behind the screen, should he ever go on *Blind Date*. The ordination of women is bad. Homosexuality is bad. Abortion is bad. Contraception is bad. Feminism is bad. Sex before marriage is bad. The Tory party used to be OK, but now even that's gone bad. “I was converted by Margaret Thatcher and her faith in family values. Now, though, the party has gone much, much too far the other way.”

Aren't there any moral issues that vex you? I ask. “No,” he says. Although, later, he does dither when it comes to the question of oral sex – or “blow jobs” as he so elegantly puts it. “I'm not sure what the Catholic teaching is here, actually. Do you know?” Hardly, darling. I'm an agnostic Jew. Eventually, he concludes that oral sex is probably OK so long as a couple are married, and it leads to full sex with the possibility of procreation. So, no, a blow job for a blow job's sake is not on. Anne Widdecombe would agree, I think.

There is very little he and I agree on. Although it would be wrong to assume his views weren't in vogue in some circles. We meet in Cheltenham because of the literary festival being held down there. He's been invited to give a talk on Catholicism and his work. It is jam-packed. When the discussion goes to the floor, the audience grumble endlessly about Catholics not being Catholic enough. Tories not being right-wing enough, today's moral standards not being high enough. Us liberals might be about to receive a nasty kick up our bottoms.

However, while it is easy to hate what he stands for, it is impossible to hate him. He is

highly intelligent. He has the sweet face of a melancholic Tom Courtenay. I am fascinated by what it is like to have absolute faith in God, and question him to a tiresome degree. But he puts up with my thick-fingered, agnostic rummaging with infinite patience. Of course, you can never really argue to any good effect with someone who truly believes. But, still, we have many good spots.

Piers, what would you do if one of your sons said he was gay?

“I would be very sad. It would be wrong.”

“Would you prefer him to be clandestine about it?”

“Yes. I do think I would prefer not to know.”

“You wouldn't want to know something as important as your son's sexuality?”

“No. Anyway, once they're 18, they're off, aren't they, and don't really have anymore to do with you.”

“Is that true?”

“OK, maybe it isn't. Maybe I'm just not a nice person.”

Not a nice person? No, probably not, he says. In what way?

“I can be nasty in all sorts of ways.” I'm looking for an example here. Piers. “Well, when I heard about Dunblane, I felt nothing.” Nothing? Even though you are a parent yourself? “I just felt nothing. It was the same with Princess Diana. When someone phoned me at 7am to say she had died, my first thought was: ‘Yes, but is that any reason to phone someone at 7am?’ But why? He doesn't know, he says. Perhaps, he then adds, “it's because I have a sliver of glass in my heart.” Perhaps, I tell him, it's because he is frightened of his own emotional impulses.

He accepts I might have a point. He very much does feel there might be some evil genie within. Later, when we discuss

abortion, and I ask him if it can be acceptable in any circumstances, he comes out with a very odd reply. “No. I mean, if my wife were to give birth to a child with two heads, I would want to break its neck and dump it in a bin. But that doesn't mean it is right.” You'd want to break its neck? But God, surely, doesn't care about how many heads people have? He cares only about their souls. “Of course. But as I said, I am nasty.” Of course, considering yourself full of sin is a very Catholic thing.

Piers' father was Sir Herbert Read, the poet, novelist and art critic and Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh University. And a married man, when he

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fell in love with Piers' mother, Margaret Ludwig, a German, expatriate music lecturer who was newly converted to Roman Catholicism. “She'd been to study music in Cologne, where she found herself very impressed by Rhineland Catholicism. When she came back to Edinburgh, she converted to the Catholic Church, then, three months later, ran off with my father, causing maximum scandal, as you can imagine.” Piers is the third of four children from this union.

His mother, he says, “never pretended she was living in anything other than a state of sin. But she adored and loved and revered my father, and thought she could make it up to

God by, perhaps, raising good Catholic children.”

His mother, he continues, was terrific in many ways. “She was very outgoing and lively and amusing and charming and a wonderful viola player.” But, in temperament, “she was the very antithesis of the cool, blonde, German stereotype. She was very Mussolini. She was small and dark, intuitive and passionate, and given to the most towering rages. We were absolutely terrified of her. Her rages were horrible. Horrible! Then she would send us to Coventry for days.” Once, when he was six or seven, his mother caught him in a barn comparing anatomical differences with Patience, a neighbour's daughter. She was outraged. She smacked him soundly before grabbing him pinchingly by his upper arm and dragging him home, where he was smacked some more and told to never, ever do such a thing again. Girls and their parts must have come across as very scary things from then on.

Yet there is always a good deal of sex in a Piers Paul Read novel. *Private Eye* even dubs him Pure Porn Read. Perhaps he is simultaneously both fascinated and repelled by sex in the same way, that say, archaiphobics are simultaneously repelled and fascinated by tarantulas, and can spend hours staring at them in the insect house at London Zoo. Anyway, what did his parents make of his sex in his books? His mother, he says, was always horrified. “She would go around telling everyone she knew: ‘You must not buy my son's book!’” And his father? “He was shocked and wondered how I knew about such things. Of course, I could not tell him that I had learned them from my mother's imagination.”

Ideally, he thinks his father would have liked to have been a great poet. T.S. Eliot was his great friend. The Reads lived mostly in Yorkshire but, fortuitously, Herbert would travel to London to lunch with Eliot. A poem in *Cas* was, apparently, inspired by one of the Reads' cats, Spitz. Herbert hoped to be an Eliot himself but, unfortunately, “the creative genius just never materialised.” A great intellectual, he became, instead, one of the founders of the ICA and a champion of modern art.

He adored his father but, yes, he was a confusing role model. Ostensibly a pacifist, he won the DSO and MC fighting in the First World War. A self-proclaimed anarchist, he accepted a knighthood from the state he despised. He was an atheist and virulent anti-Catholic, yet he ran off with Margaret and never tried to undermine her faith. Indeed, as far as Piers can recall, “the only times he objected was when the monks came round and drank all his gin.”

Piers was educated, at Ampleforth, a Catholic boarding school run by Benedictine monks, which he detested. He could not take, he says, “the contradiction between God is Love and all the bullying and beating that went on.” At the talk, there's an ex-Ampleforth pupil in the audience, who puts up his hand and says he had a thoroughly good time there, actually. “I bet you were good at rugby,” says Piers. “I was, yes,” replies the man. “I thought so,” says Piers. “If you were good at games and sport you were all right. But I was one of

those pseudo-intellectual wets who could never stand the thought of being pushed into the mud with a lot of smelly boys.” Or pushed into anything with a smelly boy.

Piers insisted his parents removed him from Ampleforth when he was 16, not only because he was dying to get out but also, he later confesses, because he fell in love with a boy in his class. “It wasn't sexual. I doubt it would have even led to an embrace. It was very ethereal.” But, still, you felt full of self-disgust? “Yes.” He is still disgusted at the thought of homosexuality. “I'm sorry, but I just can't not think about it without revulsion.” So what is someone who is gay meant to do? “Sublimate those feelings. Pray.” Don't you think Christianity sometimes creates more suffering than it relieves? “God's will is always more important than human preferences,” he retorts adamantly.

He met his wife, Emily, at a party when she was 16 and he had just graduated from Cambridge. They married two years later, when he was 26, have been married ever since, and have four children. I wonder, though, if he ever had any sex before marriage. “That's a very personal question.” Yes, but did you? “Yes, I did. And, yes, I felt very, very guilty. I confessed to a priest while I was having an affair with a woman. He told me to stop seeing that woman immediately.” Did you? “No. I went round the corner to see a Jesuit priest, who gave me absolution.” How convenient! “Yes.”

Emily is not a believer. She even, he says, regards his Catholicism as an eccentric difficulty. He'll put a crucifix up in the sitting room. She'll take it down. He'll put up a picture of the Pope. She'll remove it. Isn't this difficult for you? I ask. Not at all, he says, “because I love her, and because she is a naturally good person, without having to have any supernatural beliefs.” If you can be good without God, then what's the point in having him? “Because some people can not be good without God.” As he fears he can't be, I reckon.

Knights of the Cross is published by Widenfeld and Nicolson, price £16.99.

Competition on the sports field? You ain't seen nothing yet



DINAH HALL

It's hard to be judgmental about the English fans in Rome when I consider my own sickening behaviour at the borough's primary schools six-a-side football tournament at the weekend. Despite this week's dousing in “caring” values and the inspiring example set by Michael “single mothers' champion” Portillo, I found myself infiltrating the opposition's support and – oh, the shame of it – goading the local Catholic school's parents about their little indiscretion last year when they were disqualified for playing a child who was a brilliant footballer but who had rather inconveniently left the school to embark on his secondary education.

Evidently it's not enough to have God on your side. I thought they were trying it again this year when I spotted a chap with a beard running alongside the team, but it turned out he was the referee. Naturally I commiserated (“Nah, nah ne-nah”) with poet Roger McGough, their Most Famous Parent (all the local schools have one of these to wheel out for school fairs – it's that kind of area – but as the poor relation, we've had to make do with the fading memory of ex-parent Peter Snow enthusiastically auctioning off hits of the Berlin Wall). But I felt well and truly put in my place when one of the vanquished mothers valiantly tried to raise a cheer for

our side. My own reaction when we were knocked out of the next round (“Never mind, son, we beat them in the SATS league tables”) seemed a little mean-spirited in comparison.

Competition on the sports field, however, pales into nothing beside children's birthday parties. The trend a few years ago to outdo each other in lavish spectacles has been replaced by a new ostentatious non-materialism. “No presents please” was inscribed sanctimoniously on one invitation, making everyone else afterwards feel horribly grasping if they didn't follow suit. No one has yet been brave enough to

ditch the basic concept of going-home loot (oh, please, please, please don't let it be my child that says “is that all?” when handed the party bag), but a lot of creative agonising goes in to finding alternatives to the actual receptacle, the nasty little plastic goodie-bag (“so bad for the environment”).

My youngest was five yesterday (and it seems like only yesterday she added “condom” to her extensive vocabulary) and I was feeling quite confident about the birthday celebrations – “think Martha Stewart” is my mantra – until she came back from her friend Paisley's party, bearing a divine, environmentally friendly white pa-

per bag, hand-printed with a paisley motif from an old Indian wood-block. Entertainment was a mixture of old-fashioned party games and artistic activities orchestrated by Equally Creative Father. To compete with this I would have to go right back to the beginning – not just ask for all our stuff balloon-screwed invitations back but rename my daughter to allow for stylish theming. And a husband who got in to the swing of things would help – his contribution to the fun and games was to suggest that we give each child a travel card, tell them he is hiding at King's Cross station and that they must use their initiative to find him.

Symbolism is fine, but now we are ready for the thorny details



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Few things have gone wrong for this government yet, but perhaps its most unexpected success has been its handling of the peace process in Northern Ireland. As the Prime Minister arrives in Belfast today, he deserves unqualified praise for the way he and his Northern Ireland Secretary, Marjorie Mowlem, have brought republicans and unionists to the negotiating table. So far, Sinn Féin and the Ulster Unionist Party have only made their opening statements – this week they have to start to engage with each other's arguments. But to have come this far is a substantial achievement.

It was made possible by the careful dispensing of symbolic favours to both sides. Dr Mowlem patched her way through the marching season by letting the most high-profile Orange march go ahead at Drumcree, while re-routing two other marches that were also offensive to the nationalists.

She said she would take off the statute book the power to imprison suspects without trial, a power not used since 1975 but

which has become a unionist totem and a nationalist grievance. And she has dripped the media with hints of an inquiry into an apology for the nationalist deaths in the Bloody Sunday riot 25 years ago.

Her biggest mistake so far was to insist on the transfer of a murderer from prison in Glasgow to the Maze, demanded by loyalists to balance the discreet return of a handful of republican prisoners from England to Northern Ireland. It was the kind of unsavoury but necessary deal that helps lower the temperature among paramilitaries on both sides, but she had acted without considering Scottish opinion. Jason Campbell is a thug who killed a soccer fan because he was wearing a Celtic scarf; now he wants to be treated as a political prisoner. Never mind that the jails of Northern Ireland are filled with thugs who claim sectarian violence as "political", the Scots were not having it. Nor, significantly, was the *Daily Mail*, and Mr Blair overruled Dr Mowlem last week.

Mr Blair will have to weather the storm

from the tabloid papers, however, when he shakes hands today with Gerry Adams (away from the cameras), a touching of flesh that has been prepared for more than in any Mills and Boon novel. Again, this is symbolism.

It matters to unionists because Mr Adams' hands have blood on them. It matters to Sinn Féin because they crave "parity of esteem". To a rationalist, neither argument carries much weight, but the whole process is about appeasing irrational forces, and Mr Blair is right to judge that eroding republicans' sense of exclusion is more important than making absolutist moral judgments about the Sinn Féin president.

The important point about what Alan Clark said last week – that the only way to deal with the IRA is to kill 600 people overnight – is not that it was unfunny but that it was wrong. It displayed no understanding of the causes of terrorism. Terrorism can only thrive in a community that feels an overwhelming sense of injustice. The IRA is sustained by the myth of oppressive, colonial British power. Loyalist paramilitaries by the fear of being sold out by treacherous authorities to a foreign country.

Both perceptions are being broken down, by a process that began long before Mr Blair became Prime Minister. Because if we come to praise Mr Blair, we must also pay tribute to his predecessor. It was one of John Major's lasting achievements to have prepared the ground for today's breakthrough. It was he who broke the taboo against "negotiating with terrorists", who recognised that both republicanism and unionism had reached a watershed in their histories. Republicans are prepared to postpone Irish unification in return for a show of respect to their tribe; while mainstream unionists have moved on from the seige mentality of "no surrender".

But, in the end, Mr Major was constrained by his party and the parliamentary situation. At one shoulder he had Lord Cranborne, a hardcore unionist, at the other Michael Howard, a hardcore law- 'n'-order-ist. Mr

Blair has neither. And he has the ability to learn from Mr Major's mistakes. One of the causes of the breakdown of the last ceasefire was that there were no concessions on prisoners. Mr Blair has shown flexibility: it is not pretty, but it works.

Another lesson the new government has learned from Mr Major is that it pays to listen to advice from Dublin. Now, it is time to look beyond Sinn Féin and the UUP, and to demand movement from Dublin on articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution, which lay territorial claim to Northern Ireland.

Today what matters is the need to move beyond the symbolism of who shakes hands with whom. It is time to start talking about some of the thorny details of a settlement based on consent. If that includes rewriting the Irish constitution, so much the better, since that would steal a line from both sets of hard-liners in the north – unionists who want to go on distrusting the Republic, and republicans who want to continue fantasising about union with the South.

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LETTERS

Minister and shares

Sir: I was surprised to see two articles about Nigel Griffiths, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Competition and Consumer Affairs, (10 October) which claimed that his having stood aside from three competition cases leaves him little to do.

As a former junior competition minister, John Redwood, the Conservative trade and industry spokesman, whom you quote in your report, is surely aware that these would be only a small minority of the cases with which Nigel has dealt. He has already been involved in over 100 competition decisions and issues.

Mr Redwood first asked about Nigel's involvement in the P&O-Stena merger on 1 September and was told the following day that Nigel's decision to stand aside from decisions on this merger was taken on the broad principle that he had a family interest in the shares of P&O. Since then Mr Redwood has written to either myself or Nigel on seven occasions and raised the matter in his party conference speech. He repeatedly alleges he has not had answers to his questions.

What I find as surprising as it is distasteful is that Mr Redwood has for some weeks been aware of the reasons why Nigel's family interest in these shares remained unresolved at the time of the election.

Nigel and his sister inherited the P&O shares from his father, who disappeared in 1994. His father's estate was not settled until this year, partly because his body was not found until 1996. Nigel acts not only as executor to his father's estate but as trustee of the financial affairs of his sister, who is mentally handicapped. This is the nature of his continuing family interest in these shares, on the basis of which he has stood aside from the P&O decision. The ICI shares similarly came from his father.

Mr Redwood's questions have been answered and I see no public interest in the insensitive manner in which he continues to rake over this ground.

MARGARET BECKETT
President of the Board of Trade
Department of Trade and Industry
London SW1

TV invasion

Sir: Michael Forte refers to the "blanket bombing" of British television by American broadcasters with massive libraries of cartoons ("So many cartoons on TV, it's not funny", 8 October). There is, of course, a solution to hand. Under EU law, all TV channels must show a majority of British/European programmes (wherever practicable).

Clearly this law is not properly applied to cable and satellite channels such as Nickelodeon, the Cartoon Network and Fox Kids, whose content is overwhelmingly recycled and American. These channels thus compete unfairly with the terrestrial channels who do invest in locally made programmes. This is the Gresham's Law of broadcasting – bad practice is driving out good.

Our children have a right to see stories from their own cul-

ture and their own continent. On an exclusive diet of hamburger, it is difficult to see how they will be able to develop diverse tastes.

We could act in our own economic and cultural self-interest by asking such channels to invest a proportion of their turnover in home-made programmes. Under French law, the satellite channel Canal Plus invests 12 per cent of turnover in French/European film. This results in a massive £70m investment per year. A similar measure here would transform children's TV.

CAROLE TONGUE MEP
(London E, Lab)
Ilford, Essex

Job for cheetahs

Sir: On 7 October, your science page told us that cheetah numbers are in alarming decline, that cheetah cubs are vulnerable to large predators, especially

lions, and that though cheetahs are perceived as savannah animals, they can live happily in woodland.

On 8 October, Hamish McRea tells us that re-afforestation schemes in Scotland are hampered by an over-large deer population, and suggests the introduction of predators to reduce them.

How about a millennium project to introduce cheetahs to the Scottish Highlands? PATRICIA HALLAM THOMAS
Buckley, Flintshire

Don't blame patients

Sir: Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, paints an inaccurate picture of patients thoughtlessly abusing the health service and its staff ("TV chief charts new course in the health service", 9 October). Most people in our experience are conscientious users, who in-

stead often do not get respect from staff – respect for people's insight and expertise in managing long-term illness as well as common courtesies.

The Long-Term Medical Conditions Alliance – an alliance of 70 national organisations, representing over half a million patients – welcomes a review of the Patient's Charter. But we want included standards for more information and better communication – needs hacked up by our research – rather than being lectured.

JUDY WILSON
Director
The Long-Term Medical Conditions Alliance
London EC1

Sir: Rather than charging people for using the NHS, it would be more sensible to charge people for abusing the NHS. From my experience of managing in hospitals and in GP

surgeries around 15-20 per cent of patients fail to turn up for their appointments. These are the people who should be charged. They waste valuable clinical time and contribute to long waiting lists for every one else to see GPs and consultants. DANIEL ELKELES
London SW15

Sir: The UK-based pharmaceutical industry fully agrees with Polly Tynbee (article, 6 October) when she seeks to provide an evidence-based basis for NHS treatment. But for the NHS to cut the medicines bill would end up costing far more than it would save.

Not only do doctors in the UK already prescribe fewer medicines than most of their counterparts abroad, but they also prescribe more generics, with well over 50 per cent of prescriptions now written generically. It is not true that the NHS pays more than any

other country for medicines. Of 15 OECD countries, Britain is 14th in terms of expenditure on medicines per head, just above Ireland.

Over the past 40 years, advances in the use of medicines have helped to free up hospital beds by reducing the number of admissions by half for 12 major disease areas alone. The resulting annual saving of about £10bn is double the cost of all NHS medicines.

While measures to restrict the availability of medicines might yield short-term savings, in the long term they will drive up costs in other sectors of healthcare, such as hospital surgery and community care. Medicines are part of the answer to the NHS's funding problems, not the cause. Professor TREVOR M JONES
Director General
The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry
London SW1

Bags of trouble

Sir: I read your report on schoolbags and back pain (8 October) with interest. I am now 26 and whilst I was at school, our class furniture was changed from old-style desks to new tables and lockers. The lockers were too small for the books and A4 files we used, so we were in the habit of carrying all our books, files and equipment for the day around with us.

On one occasion I arrived home heavily laden, after a weary two-mile walk, and walked straight on to the bathroom scales. My total weight (with baggage) came to 13 stone. Since I had that morning weighed myself at six and a half stone, I was carrying about 95 per cent of my body-weight, estimating my school uniform as 5 per cent.

I am already in occasional pain from my mid back, which I can only expect to get worse. Can anyone recommend a good osteopath in the Plymouth region? MARY FLETCHER
Plymouth, Devon

Cannabis drive

Sir: I am not in principle against legalising cannabis. But does it impair the ability to drive? Does it show up on a breathalyser? Is there an alternative that the police can use? Until these questions are addressed the answer has to remain no to legalising it. Mrs JACKIE FLAHERTY
Wokingham, Surrey

Sir: It appears that the most effective way to change the law is with the assistance of supermarkets, as with Sunday trading and the Net Book Agreement. Perhaps Tesco or Sainsbury could join the campaign to decriminalise marijuana by selling it alongside herbs and spices. CLAIRE BEZZANO
Manchester

Another fin mess

Sir: What's all this about Baroness Thatcher complaining about the lack of national markings on the tail fins of British Airways aircraft? Doesn't she realise that we have a perfectly good and not a little expensive RAF to do this sort of thing? CHRIS WESTWOOD
Leeds

A little geography goes a long way in the car



MILES KINGDON

"The land of dancing trees". This was a striking phrase I heard on the radio yesterday or the day before, used to describe the Somerset Levels. People who live in that mysterious wet place of eels and tons and Sedgemoor had been asked to speak into Tony Staveacre's microphone about their feelings on the place, and one of them, I think it was a farmer who had moved there from the Mendips Hills, said that when he got there he was told he would be living in "the land of dancing trees".

The reason for this was that a lot of the Somerset Levels is no more than a crust over the watery ooze below, and far from being solid land it has all the rigidity of a stretch of duck boards over a marsh.

"You can see this when something really heavy comes past," he said. "Maybe a big lorry or a herd of cows. They'll shake the ground as they pass, and if there's a line of poplars nearby, you can really see them dancing."

The land of dancing trees. Nice phrase, that. He was obviously fond of it, as he used it several times, but it's the kind of phrase that will probably fade away as it is not being used for some kind of tourist campaign and won't be immediately identified. Costa Blanca, yes. Cote d'Azur, yes. Lake District and the Cornish Riviera, yes, even though nobody has much idea what a Riviera actually is. But a fortnight in the Land of Dancing Trees? Sorry, sir – we don't seem to have that on our computer...

It is stray, directionless thoughts like these which occupy one's mind on long car journeys. I have recently been driving to some of the further parts of Wales to take part in a BBC Wales TV series about some fine old Welsh families, and a long way it is too. The scenery by itself, though grand, is not enough to keep you awake en route, so I have taken a huge bag of audio tapes with me to accompany and channel my will

of the wisp thoughts. They are all of BBC radio programmes I have recorded over the months, thinking they will one day be worth listening to, and strange bedfellows they make too. On the same tape as the Somerset Levels portrait, for instance, there was someone doing a good reading of a Bertrand Russell essay "In Praise of Idleness" which made the point (quite repeatedly, actually) that there is nothing very good about work for its own sake.

He was writing in the 1930s, when it must have required a degree of courage or insouciance to praise unemployment in words like these...

"I want to say, in all seriousness, that a great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of work, and that the road to happiness and prosperity lies in an organised diminution of work. First of all, what is work? Work is of two kinds. First, altering the po-

sition of matter at or near the earth's surface relatively to other such matter. Second, telling other people to do so. The first kind is unpleasant and ill-paid. The second is pleasant and highly paid..."

Now, this kind of definition, dividing all mankind into either miners or managers, is one of those ultra-simplified ones which are intended to make a comic point, rather like describing golf as the process of hitting a white ball round the landscape with a stick. There is, of course, more to golf than that. But, essentially, not a lot more. And Bertrand Russell does go on to amplify the second, more agreeable and profitable kind of work, as follows.

"The second kind is capable of indefinite extension. There are no only those who give orders but those who give advice as to what orders should be given. Usually two opposite kinds of advice are given simultaneously by two organisations of men.

This is called politics. The skill required for this kind of work is not knowledge of the subjects as to which advice is given, but knowledge of the art of persuasive speaking and writing... i.e. advertising."

I think this is the Bertrand Russell I like best, the white-haired, aristocratic stand-up comedian, not the big-time philosopher who went looking for order and mathematical certainty in the universe and mistaking seduction for love and friendship. In any case, according to Humphrey Carpenter and Ray Monk, Russell's new biographer, all this search for a tidy universe sprang from the tragic way in which Russell lost both parents while still a baby...

How do I know all this? Lord bless you, sir, it comes from *Night Waves*, the Radio 3 programme. Oh, yes, we don't all listen to Radio 1 in those little boxes on wheels going up and down the M5. It's an intellectual ferment in some of them.

Blurred vision at
the BeebNICK
WALKER
AUNTIE'S
PERFECT DAY

The switchboards of the BBC have been jammed recently, not with complaints, but with compliments. "Perfect Day", a promotional advertisement featuring 30 stars singing Lou Reed's ballad, is set to be an enormous hit. If negotiations are successful, the song will be released as a charity CD. A sure-fire number one, according to Radio 1. Quite right for a song that has resurfaced as a classic in a superb rendition and a stunning video. But why has Auntie Beeb chosen a song about heroin for an anthem?

Heroin isn't mentioned in "Perfect Day". The subject lurks in the sub-text, the lair of the interpreter. Of course, decoding song lyrics carries the danger of over-interpretation. But there's little doubt "Perfect Day" is about heroin. Many genres of music have their drug of influence. For reggae it is marijuana. For rave music it is ecstasy. Only once you have listened to Bob Marley when stoned does the lift of reggae click into place. Listen to dance music when under the influence of MDMA and finally rave makes sense.

The link between heroin and the music of Lou Reed is well established. An essay in the *International Journal of Drug Policy* quotes one former heroin user who said he thought "Lou Reed was rubbish now that he had stopped using heroin".

On the surface "Perfect Day" is a bittersweet ballad about two lovers who spend a day together, drinking sangria in the park, at the zoo. That's the sweet bit; but the relationship here is as easily read as the author's love for another person, but his connection to something equally transforming. The relationship in the song is fed by the push and draw of addiction. "You just keep me hanging on", sings Reed. The object of the singer's affections transforms him, but the change is temporary: "You made me forget myself. I thought I was someone else, someone good." The "you" in the song is heroin.

If you understand the lyrics of this song as only the story of two lovers, then the last line doesn't make much sense. "You're going to reap just what you sow". Who is the singer talking to? The lover? The listener? The

lines make sense for the BBC as a cut little reminder of the virtue of the licence fee. If you understand the song as about drugs, it makes perfect sense.

Interpretation can always be pushed too far. But this song is not about transvestism, say, or electroshock therapy, the subjects of two of Reed's other songs, "Walk on the Wild Side" and "Kill Your Sons". It was no accident that this is the track used in *Trainspotting* when the lead character, Renton, overdoses on class A narcotics, but "Perfect Day" is not about heroin because it was used in *Trainspotting*. The song was used in *Trainspotting* because it is about heroin.

Okay, say "Perfect Day" isn't about heroin addiction. It's about two people who have a really nice day and the only sub-text is that they might have held hands. In that case, Innesco's *Rhinoceros* is simply about people turning into pachyderms



Transformed: Lou Reed, a little on the wild side

and Brazil is what film-maker Terry Gilliam thinks the future will actually be like (especially the hats).

Not that one has to be aware of the drug subtext to enjoy "Perfect Day". It is a great song, and the BBC has produced an astonishing video, and I agree with the message. It's a wonderful version of a wonderful track. I'll be among the first to buy it. Jane Frost, head of corporate and brand marketing at the BBC, who was among those who chose the song, insists "this song has nothing to do with drug use". The point is, this song expresses more about drug use than it does about the fact that an organisation like the BBC should be funded by a system like the licence fee. "Perfect Day" is too good a song to be reduced to the status of a staple. To throw Reed's words back at the BBC's marketing team, "you're going to reap just what you sow".

The writer is media editor of *Wallpaper* magazine.

Terminal Five at Heathrow: as certain as
the global crisis it will help to encouragePOLLY
TOYNBEE
ENVIRONMENTAL
DECISIONS

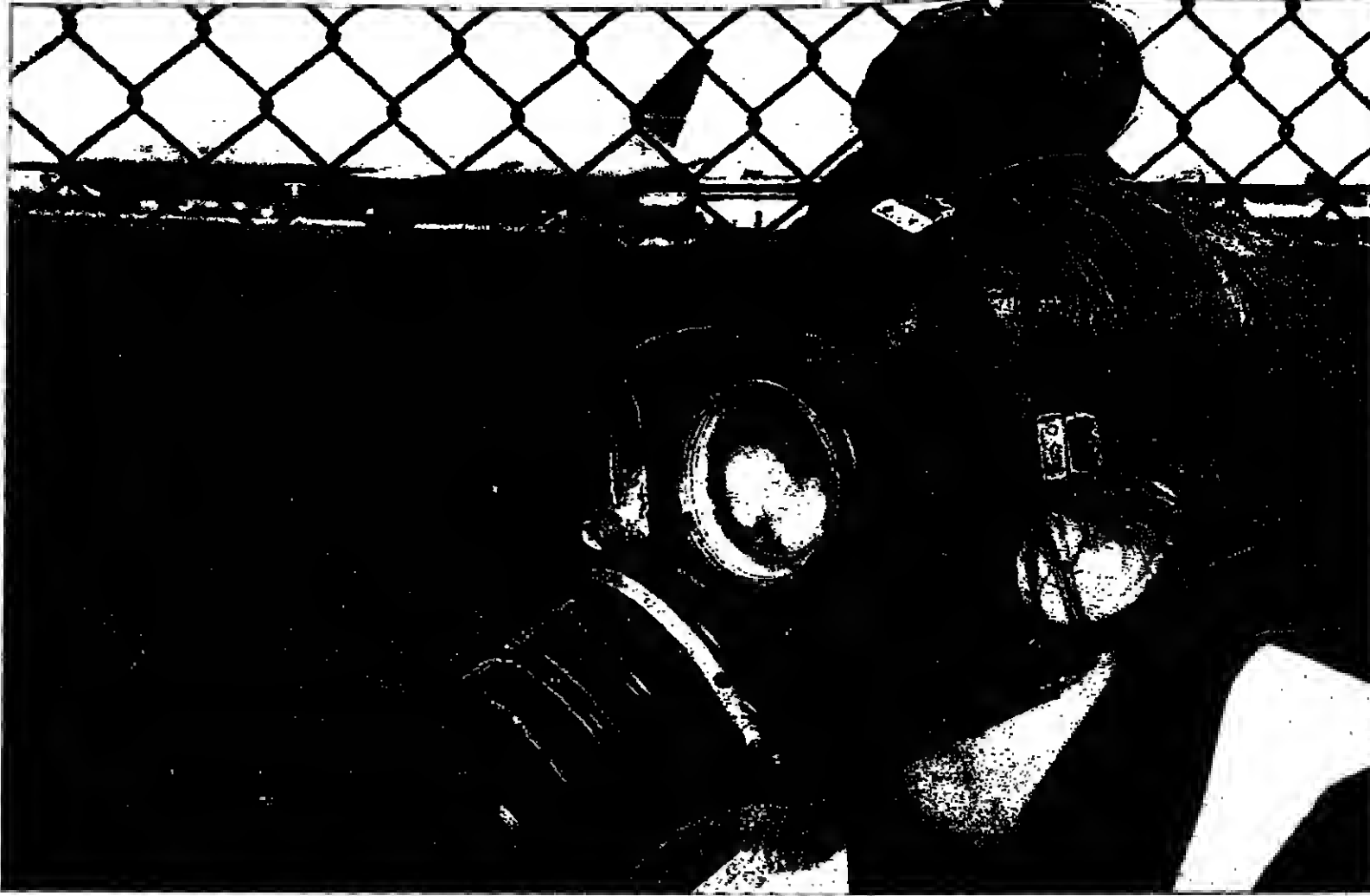
After three tedious years sitting in the boarded-up swimming pool at the Ramada Inn, the public enquiry into a fifth terminal at Heathrow Airport is about to become the longest running ever.

Most of the hotel has been taken over by the two opposing camps. In the rich, powerful corner is the British Airports Authority with their £50m budget and huge staff which stays at the hotel all week, preparing briefs and rebutting all opponents. In the poor but valiant corner is a consortium of surrounding local authorities, who have now just pulled out, having spent too many millions already, leaving Friends of the Earth and local protesters as the chief challengers.

The enquiry isn't expected to end until next August, and then it will take the Inspector another year to write his report, each side accusing the other of dragging out the proceedings. But very few observers doubt the inevitable outcome. Terminal 5 (T5) will be built and finished by 2004. Designed by Richard Rogers, the 625-acre glass building with a vaulted tented roof will take in thirty million extra passengers a year.

Why is it bound to be built? Because there is no alternative. Already Heathrow is crammed beyond capacity, with six million more passengers than it has room for. The strain is showing. Passengers are getting angry, complaints are rising fast, baggage handling can't cope, bags are being lost in transit and planes are queuing up on the tarmac because all the stands for loading and unloading people and bags are full. Air travel is rising by four per cent a year and T5 is needed urgently, as well as Gatwick, Luton, and Stansted running at capacity – and another new runway in the South-east sometime soon.

Most of the extra demand each year is for holidays. Never before have so many British people travelled abroad so much. What used to be exclusively a rich man's pleasure is now available to all but the poor: weddings on a beach in the Seychelles, families flying to



We all want to fly, but protesters against Terminal 5 recognise the folly of it

Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Florida, winter breaks in Tenerife. Having just spent the week in dismal, lighted Blackpool, I have no doubt at all that cheap air travel has hugely improved the pleasure people get from their hard-earned holidays.

Despite being an offshore outpost, London is the biggest airport in Europe, and the main port of entry to Europe from the rest of the world. Amsterdam, Paris and Frankfurt are bidding to overtake us. All have plenty of spare capacity, eager to take over any extra business if Britain lets slip. British Airways gets £1bn worth of transfer traffic alone through London. BA are saying that if they don't get more capacity in London soon, they'll move their hub to some other European capital. The City fears the knock-on effect to their global finance industry if London no longer remains the key entry airport to Europe. All these are good reasons why the decision to build T5 is inevitable. What else can the Inspector seriously propose – short of a green revolution?

Friends of the Earth raise local environmental issues. T5 will be largest ever structure built on green belt land. The Perry Oaks site is a wetland that is one of London's best for wildfowl and wading birds. As ever, there has been a last minute discovery of a rare species, this time something called a Water

Aven (a plant). Perry Oaks sounds like a rural paradise. In fact this rare 'wetland' is a Thames Water sewage and sludge plant within the perimeter fence of Heathrow, hardly an idyllic picnic spot.

The more serious challenge has been from local residents, the 300,000 dwellings deafened within the 'noise footprint' of the airport and others in the flight path. This knock-down-drag-out enquiry has at least forced major concessions out of BAA that didn't appear in their original plans. They now

guarantee there will be no greater noise, that there will be no further car parks, and, most important of all, that they will spend £500m on three new rapid rail links to cut down car use. All that is little consolation to the wretched sufferers who live nearby. Yet, however much we pity local residents, it is unlikely that we or the government will play local residents to stop the T5 development. We all want to fly.

But then, we also want to breathe – and by standards, an airport is an environmental

'Every American consumes double the
energy of every Briton'

calamity. More than eighty million passengers will fly in and out of it, with 100,000 daily car journeys, guzzling and spewing out vast quantities of fuel. High altitude flying damages the ozone layer, while fossil-fuel burning emits carbon dioxide, which is rapidly overheating the climate. Yet the demand for more and more air travel is over-ending and no government looks likely to cap it.

World energy consumption has increased by more than a third in 20 years and tourism is now the third biggest world

industry. Air travel accounts for one sixth of fuel used for transport. Global warming is here: few dispute it now, with natural habitats shifting 80 kms north per decade. To halt it, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says the world needs to reduce carbon emissions by 60 to 80 per cent.

Britain has promised a reduction of 20 per cent by 2010 – and the UK only contributes 3 per cent to global carbon emissions. Since air travel is only a small part of that, why worry

about a bigger airport? Well, one person's round trip from London to Florida uses up around half the total annual carbon emission allowance for each person for all purposes, according to the IPCC recommendations. If the world is to survive,

Strangely, air travel is not counted into each country's inventory of greenhouse gas emissions, as 00-000 could decide how to apportion it. America refuses to reduce any emissions at all, though every American consumes double the energy of every Briton, 100 times each Chinese and thirty times each Indian. In the face of that, it's tempting to despair. Why should we worry about T5, why should any country worry about a bit more here and there, while the Americans guzzle 00 regardless?

But some day soon we will have to ration energy use, in planes and cars. There will come a time when suddenly the world is frightened by disasters into allowing politicians to do what must be done. Will we find a so-

cially acceptable way to ration energy, or will the rich take it all?

Here is one scheme some environmentalists have put forward. If as a nation we set a limit to the total number of air miles flown, or indeed to the number of car miles driven, we could issue a ration in every citizen. Those who did not want to use their driving or flying ration could sell their quota on the open market. The rich would scramble to buy, the poor to sell if they wanted to. If the price was exorbitant enough, Rations would become very valuable and it would lead to a healthy redistribution of wealth that had nothing to do with taxation. (Think what this principle could do for redistributing wealth between rich and poor nations too.)

Nothing so bold is even permitted on the agenda yet – perhaps not until America starts to choke and suffocate. Will it be too late by then to save ourselves? In the meantime happy flying.

Burning in cyber hell? The last thing you need is Help

THOMAS
SUTCLIFFE
ON HOME
COMPUTING

I bought a new home computer the other day, finally responding to a growing sensation – like the pressure on one's eardrums in an ascending aircraft – that the conditions of life were changing in some fundamental way. I pretended it was for the children, naturally. They have such marvellous educational software these days... all linked in to the national curriculum, you know... quite unforgivable to bring them up as cyber-bumpkins... they are, after all, citizens of the new information order.

Unfortunately my children are not yet quite old enough to get the machine up and running, which means that I have spent the past three or four weeks in the purgatorial wasteland of Setup – an infernal region of lost souls, beating their bare breasts with computer manuals and cruelly tormented by the digital lumps of this alternative universe.

What comes to mind most frequently is Dr Johnson's famous rebuke to Lord Chesterfield, who had snubbed him in the early days of his work on the dictionary but became fulsome on the eve of publication, perhaps hoping that the work would be dedicated to him. Johnson sent him a letter, weighing up with icy precision

the exact balance of his indebtedness. "Is not a Patron, my Lord", he wrote, "one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?"

I don't think I had ever really understood the full burden of rage in those last few words until I encountered "Help", the feature on almost every software programme to which you turn for assistance when the water is lapping at your chin and a sob is gathering in your sternum. Frankly Dr Johnson had it easy – it suited him to craft that final remark as a paradox, but what Lord Chesterfield had so belatedly done was not, in truth, an encumbrance. "Help", on the other hand, often feels as if it is actively malevolent – an act of secret revenge on the part of software programmers who were teased at school.

The most common experience is to be taken on a great loop of explanation which returns you, enervated by hope, to the precise point at which you began. You have advanced a step but you have wasted a quarter of an hour doing it. (It is a peculiar feature of computers that you need awesome amounts of free time to

take advantage of their time-saving features.)

The ultimate expression of this lingo-like solicitude is the Office Assistant, a small animated sprite that forms part of Microsoft's latest word processing package. The Office Assistant is a kind of pixellated genie which springs up, not when you ask for help but when it thinks you need it. When you genuinely need it, on the other hand, it turns dumb and repetitive. It is difficult to convey how infuriating this is, and the offence is aggravated by the perky impudence of the animated figure that appears on your screen – in my case a cartoon paperboy with hooded eyes and eyebrows which it arches occasionally in what I take to be amused contempt at my incompetence. Sometimes it actually winks – usually the cue for me to get up from the desk and walk around until I stop hyperventilating. What I most want to do with the Office Assistant is punch it in the face until it understands that it must never appear again, but when I type an enquiry about how I might do this it simply ignores it. Now I know, of course, that there must be some way of disabling this uniquely repulsive device but to find out what it is I would have to descend to

an even deeper circle of the inferno – the customer help-line.

I don't want to dismiss these nut of hand – on several occasions recently the fraying thread of my sanity has been preserved by some disembodied voice which calmly explained the arcane secrets of a particular piece of software. But Johnson's "encumbers with help" is pertinent here, too. Before summoning what is laughably called "support" you have to prepare yourself well – a full range of identifying serial numbers (including mother's birthdate and maiden name), pencil and paper, thermos flask of coffee and survival rations. You also need vast reserves of patience, a commodity which is by definition almost exhausted, because if it wasn't you wouldn't voluntarily be exposing yourself to this torment.

You brace yourself and ring. A computerised voice informs you that you will be connected as soon as possible and that the company has won many awards for the quality of its after-sales care. A real person comes on the line but you only make it half-way through your wall of distress before you are switched back to music again. Ten minutes pass.

A voice comes on the line but your moan of relief is brutally

cut off by the realisation that this is another recording, two employees have been made to act out an unconvincing dialogue about the depth of the company's commitment to its customers and the extraordinary range of its services ("If you get put through in Finn", one says with exquisite cruelty, "don't forget to congratulate him on being named employee of the month." All you hear is that ominous "If".)

Van Morrison returns. Another recorded voice gives a telephone number where you can leave your comments about the support services. You wonder at the penalties for obscene telephone calls. Then, just as you are about to beat the handset on the edge of your desk until it is a flail of wires and shattered plastic, a human turns up. He can't answer your question and cordially sends you back to the switchboard where the whole thing starts again.

There's no alternative to this, of course, barring the employment of a personal computer expert. But somehow the affliction of using these services wouldn't be as great if they didn't add benign mendacity to their aggravations; if, in other words, they were called anything but "Help".

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Jarl Kulle

Jarl Kulle, actor: born Angelholm, Sweden 27 February 1927; married first Louise Hermelin (one daughter), second Anne Nord (two daughters); died Bergshamra, Sweden 3 October 1997.

One of Sweden's most distinguished stage and screen actors, Jarl Kulle is best known to the rest of the world for his work in the films of Ingmar Bergman. He was one of several players (including Bibi Andersson, Gunnar Björnstrand, Max Von Sydow and Harriet Andersson) whom Bergman consistently utilised in his films, and for his late masterpiece *Fanny and Alexander* (1982), he created a role specifically for Kulle. With his aquiline good looks, regal bearing and extrovert style he excelled in playing seducers and rousers, and he also featured in several of the racy comedies for which his country gained a reputation in the Sixties.

Born in Angelholm, Sweden, in 1927, he trained from 1946 to 1949 at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, with which he maintained a close relationship throughout his career, making his home in the town of Bergshamra, just 30 miles from Stockholm. Though his dramatic style and bearing made him an outstanding classical actor, he also excelled in modern comedies and even musicals, early shows including *My Fair Lady* and *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*.

In 1956 he had great success in Stockholm as the son Ed-

mond in the world premiere of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Thirty-two years later he starred in the same play as the father.

He would still be little known outside Sweden, however, were it not for his association with Ingmar Bergman. His first film for the director was *Waiting Women* (*Kvinnors Vänster*, 1952), in which three women tell of incidents from their married lives. In the first of the episodes, Kulle seduces a former childhood sweetheart (Anita Björk) while her husband is away.

In Bergman's exquisite comedy *Smiles of a Summer Night* (*Sommarnattens Leende*, 1955), the first film to bring its director world acclaim (it was later turned into the Sondheim musical *A Little Night Music* and was the inspiration for Woody Allen's *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*), Kulle was the pompous manacred dragon who is outraged at the thought of his mistress reuniting with an old love ("I can tolerate my wife's infidelity, but concerning my mistress I'm a tiger").

In 1960 he was given top billing in Bergman's *The Devil's Eye* (*Djävulens öga*). The title comes from an Irish proverb which states that "a woman's chastity is a sty in the devil's eye", and Kulle was Don Juan, sent back to earth by a troubled devil to woo a pure country maiden. Heavy with typical debates on life, love and religion, the comedy was minor Bergman, but Kulle was moving in his anguish when he falls in love with the unattainable heroine.

Now About These Women



Aquiline good looks and extrovert style: Kulle in Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night*, 1955

Photograph: Ronald Grant

(*För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor*, 1964) was a misconceived attempt by Bergman to make a farcical satire on critics, with coy gags (a love scene is blacked out with a title card explaining an attempt to avoid censorship), and an insistently jokey musical score (with liberal use of "Yes, We Have No Bananas"), but Kulle's poseur of a critic, with his pink carnation, white spats and enormous quilted pen extracted some humour from the strained project.

In 1966 Kulle joined two other Bergman regulars, Bibi Andersson and Gunnar Björnstrand, in a film directed and written by Vilgot Sjöman, *My*

Sister, My Love (*Syskonbädd*, 1966), but though the performances were praised, the film's lumberingly bleak account of an incestuous affair and its tragic consequences was dismissed by critics as sub-Bergman. Bergman himself created a role specially for Kulle in *Fanny and Alexander* (*Fanny och Alexander*). In this multi-faceted evocation of childhood in turn-of-the-century Sweden, which won four Academy Awards including Best Foreign Film, Kulle was superb as the ebullient, excitable and sexually voracious Uncle Gustav.

Five years later Kulle was in another Oscar-winning film,

Gabriel Axel's exquisite adaptation of Isak Dinesen's short story *Babette's Feast* (*Babettes Gæstebud*, 1987), in which he played the aged General Lowenhielm who returns to the small religious community where two sisters, one of whom had been his great love many years past, invite him to dinner. It is Lowenhielm, amazed to encounter such succulent fare, who realises the true identity of the cook when he tastes the "Cailles en sarcophage" which she herself invented and once served in a famous Paris restaurant. The general's palpable joy in the meal, and his poignant farewell to his former sweet-

heart ("I have been with you every day of my life") were affecting realised in Kulle's subtly humorous and touching performance.

Kulle himself both wrote and directed one film in 1968, *The Bookseller Who Gave Up Bathing* (*Bokhandlaren som slutade bada*), in which he also acted as a friend of the hero, a middle-aged bookseller who marries a young widow and is rapturously happy until he discovers that she used to be a prostitute. Both poignant and funny, the finely crafted film was hailed as a notable directing debut.

— Tom Vulliamy

Sayed ad-Darsh

Sayed Mutawalli ad-Darsh, imam: born Kaffa, Egypt 26 December 1930; married 1964 (two sons, two daughters); died Cairo 25 September 1997.

British Muslims approach the millennium without the leadership of one of their most loved, respected and capable leaders. Besides being an extremely learned, respected and accessible *ulema* (scholar), Sayed ad-Darsh was a pioneer, a practical leader who always seemed to attain that fine balance between idealism and pragmatism.

He stood head and shoulders above most of the riff-raff who pass as Muslim leaders in Britain today in his humility, compassion and brand of Islam: an Islam based on tolerance, understanding and relevancy. Ever courteous, he was the Muslim woman's ideal imam: he listened and explained; and he was both patient and firm.

There are over a thousand imams in Britain today, but few will achieve the level of understanding, and the insight into community affairs and issues that he managed. Those who knew him were inspired by his self-effacement and his genuine eagerness to learn more about what makes the community tick (and not tick).

Ad-Darsh came to Britain in December 1971 to take up the post of Imam at the Islamic Cultural Centre, Regent's Park Mosque. Aged only 41, he had however already had an illustrious career which included a two-year stint in Lagos, Nigeria and being head of the foreign and missionary department at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the Islamic world's oldest and most influential university.

A diploma in English language acquired at Dundee University a few years earlier made him better equipped than most of his colleagues to perform his duties. By the time he left the centre in 1980 he had already secured a reputation, particularly among second-generation British Muslims, as a leading *alim* ("scholar") who knew what it was all about.

Ad-Darsh believed in and worked towards establishing a British Muslim community. He was particularly fond of the young, the newly converted and women. In them he saw the challenge of building a new community of believers based on the pristine teachings of the

faith. And they loved him for his non-judgmental approach and deep sense of affection.

For ad-Darsh everybody mattered. He never hesitated to reach out and touch the lives of hundreds of people in a meaningful and memorable way. His sense of humour and expression of humanity changed forever the image of an imam as perpetuated in our local mosques.

But the most unique feature of ad-Darsh was the way he treated women and encouraged their spiritual and intellectual development. Women found him always eager to exchange ideas and comprehend their situation before issuing the appropriate *fatwas* ("edicts"). His work with the An Nisa Women's Society, for instance, exemplified the wisdom, commitment and trail-blazing nature of his work.

Four years ago I approached him to request his participation in a seminar on sexual abuse within the Muslim community. It was a measure of the intimacy of our relationship that I even dared to broach the subject with a man of his standing in the community. Shaykh ad-Darsh listened visibly shocked at what we had to say. He asked for proof. We gave him some. He asked for more. We gave him more. "Give me time to think about this," he said.

A few days later, sounding distressed, he rang and agreed for the seminar to take place. This was the first of a series of seminars we did with him which dealt with such wide-ranging issues as fostering and adoption, youth and drugs.

Whether it was a wedding or a prize-giving ceremony in our supplementary school ad-Darsh was always there: supporting and caring — like a guardian angel. Among his legacy is a corpus of information which he made available through his columns in several publications and broadcasts, but particularly those published in English in the magazine *Q-News*.

The scope of the issues he tackled is remarkable, as was the tone and simplicity of the message. But in a community characterised by machismo and the lack of effective communication, Sayed ad-Darsh will be remembered more for his compassion and humanity. He was the unique bridge that brought traditional Islamic sciences to the services of contemporary British Muslims.

— Humera Khan

Trevor Gardner

Trevor Gardner, colonial administrator and university treasurer: born Portsmouth, Hampshire 3 August 1917; CBE 1960; married 1944 Briege Feehan (two sons, three daughters); died Cambridge 24 September 1997.

Trevor Gardner was a distinguished member of that group of former senior colonial administrators who went on to make second careers in university administration. In Northern Rhodesia he played a key role in the moves to dismantle the ill-starred Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and to create the independent Zambia. At Cambridge University, of which he was Treasurer from 1969 to 1983, he was a powerful and influential member of the trio of principal administrative officers who held office during a period of already accelerating change. His service to the university continued long after his official retirement.

Shortly before his death he had finished correcting proofs of his autobiography, due to be published in the New Year. It provides an informed and critical insight into the period of rapid decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s, and a sim-



Gardner: creative mission

ilarly informed view of the often arcane, but notably successful, workings of Cambridge University.

Trevor Gardner was a Hampshire man, who was a pupil at Taunton's School, Southampton, and then went to Queen's College, Oxford, to read PPE (following it with a BLitt). He went straight from Oxford to the Army during the Second World War, and was commissioned into the Hampshire Regiment. Immediately after the war he joined the Colonial Service and was posted first to Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia. (It was not his first experience of Africa. He had lived for a short time from 1927 in the Transkei, where his father took up a job.)

In Africa and in Cambridge

Gardner demonstrated great ability not simply as an administrator but as an administrator with a truly creative mission. He did not just keep things going; he made them happen.

A committed Roman Catholic (he was received into the Church in 1944) he saw his task in Africa as to serve the African population, and was disillusioned when he found that in central Africa policy was directed in practice at preserving the interests of the white minority rather than the majority black population.

Most of his service was at the centre in Lusaka rather than in the district administration. He reformed the financial administration of the protectorate not merely by computerising the accounting system but also by introducing a proper use of investment. In 1959 he became Minister of Finance, and remained in that post until he left, early in 1964, following the achievement of full internal self-government.

The Federation was set up in 1953. Gardner saw it, rightly, as a great mistake, harmful politically and economically to the people of Northern Rhodesia (and Nyasaland, now Malawi). After seven years it became clear that the Federation could not continue and the Monckton Commission was established to consider its future.

Gardner's greatest service to Northern Rhodesia was as its representative on the Monckton Commission. He took his duties seriously, and spoke out with courage — which did not endear him to Federal politicians, nor to some members of the then British government at a time when it was divided over central African policy.

He was contemptuously critical of Alec Douglas-Home and Duncan Sandys, in their roles as Secretaries of State for Commonwealth Relations, responsible for Federal and Southern Rhodesian affairs. With Sir Roy Welensky, the Federal Prime Minister, he always remained on excellent terms, though their visions of Africa were totally different.

The dissolution of the Federation at the end of 1963 marked the end of Gardner's service to Africa. I first met him in November 1963 in Lusaka and was immediately impressed by his vision and his strong sense of purpose. Five years later when I went to Cambridge, and we were fellows of the same college (Wolfson), he was Deputy Treasurer. In that role he repeated what he had done in Northern Rhodesia, computerising and modernising the system of accounting and financial management, to the great and lasting benefit of the university.

In 1969 he was appointed Treasurer and for the next 14 years was a powerful influence in the university's affairs. He was much involved in restructuring the Cambridge University Press, transforming it from a financially ailing into a vibrantly successful enterprise. He helped to bring the Kettle's Yard gallery into the university. He played an important part in modernising the administration of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and in the establishment of the associated Hamilton Kerr Institute (for picture restoration).

Gardner was also an important influence in establishing, in the early 1980s, when overseas students' fees were increased by the Government, the Livingstone Trust, to provide scholarship for students from southern Africa, and then the much wider-ranging Cambridge Commonwealth Trust. These trusts continue to make it possible each year for hundreds of overseas students of high quality to study in Cambridge.

He was active in the founding of Robinson College, and was one of its trustees before it achieved full college status.

He was much involved, too, in 1966 in establishing the American Friends of Cambridge University, an organisation which provides a vehicle

for support from the United States for the university and its colleges. When he retired as Treasurer in 1983 he set up the Cambridge office of the AFUC, and its activities remained of close interest to him for the rest of his life.

He was associated with the Cambridge Union Society, and with many of the university's sporting activities, notably rugby and rowing. It was through his shrewd advice that the Oxford and Cambridge Rowing Foundation was established in 1985, to support rowing in the two Boat Race rivals.

Gardner was also active in furthering the commercial exploitation of Cambridge's research — the Cambridge Phenomenon — particularly through a group of companies, the Cambridge Research Group, with which he was closely involved from 1990.

A few days before Trevor Gardner's death, when he was very ill and knew he was failing fast, we spoke on the telephone. We discussed his autobiography, and he expressed satisfaction that he had been able to complete it. He had been determined to record the range and variety of activities which he had pursued throughout his life with such constructive energy. It was a life of great and remarkable achievement.

— Bill Kirkman



Ad-Darsh: fine balance between idealism and pragmatism

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

KEIR: Andrew. Died peacefully on 5 October 1997, aged 71. Deeply beloved husband, father and grandfather. Private funeral on Friday 17 October at 2pm at Putney Vale Crematorium. Family flowers only but donations would be gratefully received by Imperial Cancer Research Fund c/o Holmes & Lauder, Undertakers, Telephone 0181 392 1012.

MACFARLANE: John Roxburgh, aged 73, died peacefully within the closeness of his family on 9 October at Wymondham, Norfolk. Brother of Stephen, husband of Valerie, father of Kirsty and Emma, and grandfather of James. A much loved character full of conviction, photographer and later lecturer at Colchester College of Art. Cremation on Friday 17 October at 2.30pm. Enquiries and flowers to Gordon Barber Funeral Directors, Norwich. Telephone 01603 484308.

Announcements for Births, Marriages & Deaths should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Telephone 0171-293 2010 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Please include a daytime telephone number.

Birthdays

Air Vice-Marshal John Allen-Jones, 88; Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, 64; Sir Roger Carrick, High Commissioner to Australia, 60; Miss Laraine Day, film actress, 77; Sir Denis Forman, former director, British Film Institute, 80; Sir Leslie Fowden, former director of Rothamsted Experimental Station, 72; Sir Roger Gibbs, chairman, The Wellcome Trust, 63; Mr Michael Gooley, chairman, Trailfinders, 61; Mr Anthony Harris, ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, 56; Sir Michael Hutchinson, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 64; Ms Sally Keeble MP, 46; Mr John Monaghan, life president, John Monaghan, 71; Miss Marie Omond, singer, 38; Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Rosier, 82; Mr Paul Simon, singer and songwriter, 56; Mr John Simpson, chief editor, the Oxford English Dictionary, 44; Miss Rosemary Anne Sisson, author and scriptwriter, 74; Baroness Thatcher OM, former prime minister, 72; Mr Mordecai Vantana, nuclear technician, 43; Mr Peter Vereker, UK Permanent Representative, OECD, Paris, 58; Sir Mark Waller, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 57.

Anniversaries

Birthday: Allan Ramsay, portrait painter, 1713; Lillie (Emilie Charlotte) Langley, actress, 1853; Mary Henrietta Kingsley, writer and explorer, 1862; Desiderius Erasmus, Roman Emperor, poisoned by his wife Agrippina, 54; Antonio Canova, sculptor, 1822; Sir Henry Irving (John Henry Brodribb), actor, 1905; Willie Clarkson, theatrical costumier and wig-maker, 1934; Sidney James Webb, first Baron Passfield, social reformer, 1947; Walter Houser Brattain, physicist, and an inventor of the transistor, 1987. On this day: the arrest of the Templars for heresy took place in Paris, by order of Philip IV, 1307; the foundation stone of the White House, Washington, was laid by President George Washington, 1792; Greenwich was adopted as the

universal meridian at the Washington Conference, 1884; Ankara became the new capital of Turkey, 1923; Italy declared war on Germany, 1943; Athens was liberated by the Allies, 1944. Today is the Feast Day of St Columban, St Congan, St Edward the Confessor, St Faustina of Cordova, St Gerald of Aurillac, Saints Januarius and Martial and St Maurice of Carnot.

E.J. Amos

A service of thanksgiving for the life of E.J. Amos will be held on Saturday 15 November 1997 at 11.30am, at Bedford School Chapel.

Lectures

National Gallery: Peter Humfrey, "Lorenzo Lotto", 1pm. Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Ann Saunders, "Sir Thomas Gresham and the Royal Exchange: Gresham's intentions", 1pm.

Awards at the Sri Swaminarayan Hindu Mission, Newcastle, London NW11 and at a Patron, Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, attend a dinner at the House of Lords, Palace of Westminster, London SW1. The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, the Listening Library, attends the Annual General Meeting at Deodar's Hall, Thurston Avenue, London EC2.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

CASE SUMMARIES: 13 OCTOBER 1997

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Law Reports*.

Road Traffic

Secretary of State for Transport v Richards; QBD Div Ct (Henry LJ Case 1) 1 July 1997.

A person did not fall outside the exemption contained in para 22(1)(a) of Sch 2 to the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 if he stopped briefly to buy petrol and cigarettes on his way to the garage where he had booked an MOT test and was not, therefore, guilty of keeping a vehicle on a public road for which a licence under the Act was not in force.

Frederic Rafferty (Martin Ford, Legal Advice) v L.A. Swanson (for the applicant; the respondent did not appear and was not represented).

Tax

McManus v Griffin, Inspector of Tax-

es; ChD (Lightman J) 18 July 1997. Where a contract, described as a contract of employment, provided for duties to be performed in return for a salary, and in addition for services to be provided at the expense of the employee who was to retain the profits of those services, the profits were taxable under Sched D Case I. There was no reason why two receipts should not be differently treated for tax purposes.

Stephen Silman (Aileen Kelly Associates) for the taxpayer, Timothy Brennan (Inland Revenue Solicitor) for the Crown.

Search warrants

R v Chief Constable of Warwickshire, ex p Fitzpatrick; QBD (DwCt) [Rose LJ (Lewitt J)] 1 Oct 1997. A person complaining of excessive seizure in breach of s 16(8) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 should not seek his remedy by way of

judicial review but should rely on his private law remedy, since judicial review was not a fact finding exercise and as such was an extremely unsatisfactory tool by which to determine whether there had been a seizure of material not permitted by a search warrant.

Timothy Barnes QC and Colin Thompson (Hewes Perchard, Northampton) for the applicants; Timothy King QC and Graham Wells (Solicitor for Warwickshire Constabulary) for the respondent.

Duty of Care

Holbeck Hall Hotel Ltd and anor v Scarborough Borough Council; QBD (Oxford LJ (Hicks QC)) 2 Oct 1997.

The principal established by *Leakey v National Trust* [1980] QB 485 that an occupier of up-hill land owed a general duty of care to a neighbouring downhill occupier in relation to a hazard occurring on the land, whether that hazard was man-made or natural, applied

equally to an owner of downhill land. The defendant, as occupier of the downhill land forming cliffs supporting the plaintiffs' land, was liable in damages for failure to reduce the hazard of land slips, of which it was aware.

Christopher Symons QC, Paul Reed (Elliot & Co) for the plaintiffs; Paul Darling (Dibb Lupton Alsop) for the defendant.

Practice

Canada Trust Co and ors v Stolberg and ors; ChD (Lewison J) 3 Oct 1997.

The fact that the disclosure requirements of a Mareva injunction required a defendant to breach the law of another country was a factor to be taken into account by the court when considering whether to make, continue or enforce the order.

Philip Marshall (Denton Hall) for the plaintiffs; Michael Briggs QC (Clifford Chance) for the fourth defendant.

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Market tiddlers join the bull run in dramatic style

WEEK AHEAD

DEREK PAIN
STOCK
MARKET
REPORTER
OF THE YEAR

A significant, yet little noticed, event occurred last week. The FTSE index recording the behaviour of the stock market's third and fourth-liners, the so-called SmallCaps, reached a record high.

One of the mysteries of the long bull run has been the woe of display turned in by the tiddlers. For a long while the share charge was confined to blue chips, largely financials, drugs, oil and utilities. The Mid-Caps, the 250 shares making up the FTSE 250 index, were conspicuously absent from the party until they started to buck up in July, sweeping to a peak in August. They have continued to move ahead, reaching another high this month.

The FTSE SmallCap index followed tradition with a firm display in the opening months of the year, then it slipped away. But it joined its peers on

Thursday, fittingly the day of John Breckon's small companies exhibition, sponsored by Singer & Friedlander, at London's Barbican.

In the past few weeks the tiddlers have been on a roll, making quite dramatic headway. At the start of the month the index was 2,324.7 points; it finished last week at 2,378.7. NatWest Securities is one investment house which thinks there is scope for more.

It is not, however, universal joy in the lower stretches of the market. AIM shares remain well below their peak.

Still, the small fry have joined the market run at an interesting time. US banking chief Alan Greenspan has indulged in another attempt to talk down equities and the more superstitious souls are getting jumpy as the tenth anniversary of the great crash looms.

The Stock Exchange has ignored the tantalising power of association by bravely deciding to launch its controversial and still seemingly accident-prone order-driven trading system next Monday—a day 10 years ago when Footsie was at one time down a massive 301.7 points.

There is a good chance that, even if shares behave themselves, Monday will be another unhappy milestone in the market's long history.

The advent of order-driven trading, initially embracing the 100 Footsie stocks and dragging in as soon as possible the next 250, is seen in some quarters as signalling the end of the market as shaped by Big Bang 11 years ago.

Order-driven trading, as opposed to the traditional quote-driven, could have extensive repercussions; it may

have an even greater revolutionary impact than Big Bang, number one. It will certainly underline the Americanisation of the market and is likely to hasten the creation of a multi-tiered operation with institutions enjoying the privilege of a different market to the one inhabited by private investors.

One suggestion is the market should also be split into

three—the top 350 shares, the next 1,750 fully listed shares and 1,750 fully listed shares and 1,750 fully listed shares.

After all, competition is getting more intense. Frankfurt and even Paris nurse ambitions to topple London as the leading European market. And the activities of Nasdaq, the US market heavily promoting itself here and planning a con-

tinental assault, may, in coming years, represent a threat to the well-being of London.

It is to be hoped order-driven trading does not, in the long run, weaken London, leaving it vulnerable to the overseas threat. After all, it is being introduced largely to appease the US-owned investment banks. There is no reason why they should experience any particular loyalty to London—they would be equally at home in, say, Frankfurt.

Premier Farnell, the electrical components distributor, and Smiths Industries, the aerospace to medical group, company results.

Today Premier, remembered for a botched profit warning in February which hit its shares, should produce interim profits of £74m, up from £63.8m. NatWest has lowered

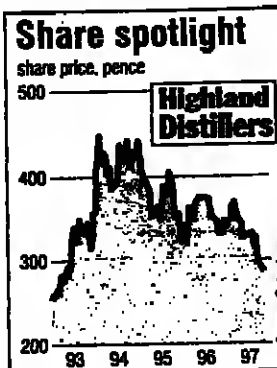
its year's profits forecast from £167m to £160m to reflect sterling's impact. Last year the group made £173m.

Smiths, fresh from taking over the Graseby electrical group for £136m, should on Wednesday produce year's figures comfortably higher, say £190m against £170.4m.

DFS Furniture, the chain which seemed to come from nowhere, reports final figures on Thursday. A 22 per cent increase to £38m is on the cards.

The company, which should have scored from the demutualisation windfalls, has been developed in spectacular style by Tory party benefactor Sir Graham Kirkham.

Highland Distilleries, the Famous Grouse group, is thought to have had a rather subdued time with year's profits, due tomorrow, only some 4 per cent higher at £44.5m.



Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including exceptional items. Other details are in figures: a '5' indicates a 5% discount; a '50' indicates a 50% discount; a '500' indicates a 500% discount; a '5000' indicates a 5000% discount.

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CBI condemns anti-cartel bill as draconian

The Confederation of British Industry claimed last night that the new Competition Bill, due to be introduced into Parliament this month, could result in businessmen being treated like drug barons in the eyes of the law. Michael Harrison says the Government's determination to crack down on cartels is causing serious friction.

The Competition Bill, scheduled to get its first reading shortly, will give the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) the power to levy fines equivalent to a tenth of the value of their sales on companies found guilty of operating anti-competitive and price-fixing agreements. Officials will also have the authority to forcibly enter premises without warning, remove documents and question executives on pain of criminal penalty.

According to the CBI, the bill contains draconian powers going beyond even those contained in the European Union law, on which the new legislation is based. Rufus Ogilvie Smalls, head of legal services at GKN and chairman of the CBI's competition panel, said the only equivalent in UK law was the powers Customs and Excise investigators had to tackle drug smugglers.

"These powers are genuinely extreme. They go well beyond the powers given to European Commission officials which are already thought to be fairly swinging," he added that the fines should be limited to a maximum of £1m.

But the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) rejected the complaints, saying: "We believe these powers are necessary. Yes they are tough but cartels tend to be secretive." Nigel Griffiths, the minister for competition, has said the days of firms being able to use bullying tactics are numbered.

investigated by competition authorities in Brussels and London and give consumer groups unwarranted rights to appeal to the proposed new Competition Commission against rulings by the OFT.

Another of its main criticisms is that the bill would impose a blanket ban on abuse of dominant positions by companies with large market shares. The same provision exists under Article 86, but the CBI said it was largely discredited and had only been used on 15 occasions.

The employers' organisation wants the clause dealing with abuse of dominant position to be defined more specifically to outlaw particular behaviour such as predatory or discriminatory pricing. It has suggested adopting the model used in Canada.

However, the DTI pointed out that in an earlier statement the CBI itself had said it "broadly supports basing the prohibition system for restrictive practices and monopoly abuse on the EU system set out in Articles 85 and 86 of the Treaty of Rome".

The department also said that many UK businesses were already familiar with Article 86-type prohibition since European Community law applied in the UK.

The CBI broadly supports the abolition of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act and its replacement with a general prohibition on agreements that were likely to have an adverse effect on competition. But it said it was anxious to see a distinction drawn between EU and UK law so that companies seeking exemptions from the provisions could not be investigated by the OFT even though they had notified Brussels.

It also said that the Government's estimate of the costs were far too low. The draft bill, published in August, put non-recurring costs at £1.2m and recurring costs at £1.4m annually and estimated the cost per firm at £16,000 on the basis that only a few hundred employers would actually be affected.

The DTI pointed out that it had already taken a number of the CBI's observations on board during the consultation exercise. A spokesman added that the Government would be prepared to consider amendments to the bill as they were tabled.



Martin Broughton: BAT's chief executive is tipped to stay with the tobacco group

Photograph: Ashley Ashwood/FT

BAT finance arm to merge with insurer

BAT yesterday confirmed plans to merge its financial services arm with Zurich Insurance. As Leo Paterson reports, the £22bn deal is the latest in a series of large-scale consolidations in the industry.

BAT Industries, the tobacco and financial services group, said yesterday that it was discussing the merger of its financial services division with Zurich Insurance, the Swiss financial services company. The talks "may or may not lead to a merger of BAT Industries' interests in financial services with the Zurich Group," BAT insisted.

But it admitted that talks were "at an advanced stage", and said Zurich's chairman, Rolf Hüppi, would be chairman and chief executive of the merged company. Its headquarters will be in Zurich.

BAT is to demerge its £10bn financial

services division, which includes UK insurers Eagle Star and Allied Dunbar, along with Farmers in the US. This will then merge on a near-equal footing with £12bn Zurich Insurance. Zurich's shareholders will own 55 per cent of the merged operating company and BAT's 45 per cent through a UK holding company.

Martin Broughton, chief executive of BAT, is tipped to stay with the tobacco business. Sandy Leitch, head of BAT's umbrella financial services group, British American Financial Services (BAFS), is expected to go with the demerged company. Goldman Sachs, Lazard Brothers, BZW and stockbrokers Cazenove are advising on the deal.

The demerger of financial services marks the end of a long period of refocusing for BAT. Following Sir James Goldsmith's £13bn takeover bid in 1989, BAT sold off many of its smaller businesses, including high street retailer Argos and paper manufacturer Wiggins Teape Appleton, leaving

it with just two heads, tobacco and financial services. In the six months to June, trading profits from financial services were £593m, compared to £800m from tobacco.

Rumours that BAT was poised to spin off its financial services business have been rife since late 1995, when it began to focus its efforts on its world-wide tobacco business. BAT's key concern about demerger has always been that, on its own, it was unlikely to enhance shareholder value. A link-up with another financial services company was therefore the obvious route out.

The BAT/Zurich insurance deal is the latest in a series of mergers in the world-wide financial services sector, following last month's link-up between US brokers Smith Barney and investment bank Salomon Brothers and the recent move by Barclays to sell parts of its investment banking arm BZW. More deals are expected in the coming months as large players strive to compete in an increasingly cut-throat market place.

Cable firms attack Sky tactics

The cable industry has launched an assault on BSkyB's insistence on offering bundles of channels to cable customers. In a submission to the Independent Television Commission, the industry's trade body has called for urgent action to curb this anti-competitive behaviour. Cathy Newman reports.

The Cable Communications Association (CCA) has called for a ban on BSkyB's "percentage carriage requirements" which force cable operators to distribute channels to a minimum percentage of customers whether they want them or not.

Consumers need "greater freedom to choose" by being able to buy single channels, or having the option of purchasing smaller packages of channels grouped or "bundled" together. The CCA says that where customers have been able to select fewer channels "consumer demand for paid TV has risen by a factor of between 50 per cent and 100 per cent". The document adds: "Were this to be replicated nationally, a further 1 to 2 million homes could be brought in to paid TV. The evidence is simply too compelling to ignore."

The submission, which will be considered by the Independent Television Commission (ITC) in its review of "bundling", comes almost three months after BSkyB bowed to pressure from the watchdog and said satellite and cable TV customers could buy the Disney Channel without having to subscribe to two other channels as well.

At the time cable operators welcomed the news but warned that if every channel was available individually many smaller ones could go out of business. The CCA suggests that "mixed bundling" should apply, where channels are offered both as a package or bundle, and on an à la carte basis.

The CCA's document also accuses BSkyB of stifling competition by cross-promoting its channels. The ITC should revise its guidelines, the cable companies claim, to end "competitive abuse", where cable operators are forced to carry satellite promotions but satellite companies are not obliged to transmit cable promotions.

IN BRIEF

UK 'could join EMU early by raising taxes'

The UK could join European economic and monetary union in the first wave on 1 January 1999 if the Government raised more than £3bn in extra taxes, according to a report based on the Treasury's own economic model published today. The Ernst & Young Item Club concludes in its latest forecast that the sharp fall in interest rates needed to sign up could be countered by abolishing mortgage tax relief and raising council tax by more than 20 per cent.

The abolition of tax relief on mortgage interest would add £240 a year to the average household's mortgage bill, while a successive 10 per cent rise in council tax would equal a £144 rise on a mid-priced property over two years. The report says "moderate but targeted" fiscal tightening would be sufficient to allow the UK to join at a rate of DM2.85. Despite the tax increases, consumers and businesses would benefit from falling inflation and lower interest rates, the report said. It predicted interest rates would fall to 4.5 per cent in EMU.

HSBC chairman to retire

HSBC Holdings, the banking group, announced yesterday that its group chairman, Sir William Purves, will retire in May 1998. Sir William will be replaced by John Bond, group chief executive since 1992. Mr Bond will also succeed Sir William as chairman of Midland Bank and chairman of the British Bank of the Middle East. Keith Whitson, currently chief executive of Midland Bank, will replace Mr Bond as group chief executive and William Dalton, currently head of the Hongkong Bank of Canada, will replace Mr Whitson.

Barclays staff to strike

Branches of Barclays could close on Friday because of a 24-hour strike by thousands of workers in a long-running dispute over pay. Members of two unions will stage the walkout, and another next Monday, in protest at a new performance-related pay scheme which they claim will lead to a wage freeze for 25,000 staff. The Banking Insurance and Finance Union (Bifu) and Barclays staff union UNIFI believe that some of the bank's 2,000 branches will be forced to close because of the action. Computer centre staff will also join the strikes. Barclays denies the new scheme will lead to a pay freeze.

Gas competition 'failing'

Gas competition is failing many businesses and wasting taxpayers' money, the Utility Buyers' Forum (UBF) claims. The organisation for electricity, gas and water purchasers said the administrative costs of competition and unresolved billing problems could outweigh the available price savings. The UBF has also condemned the lack of tenders by gas suppliers and the number of interruptions to gas supplies.

Burton reveals new name

Burton Group has announced it is changing its name to Arcadia following a nationwide competition. The group is demerging its Debenhams department store chain. Its other fashion businesses will keep their existing names and identities under the new Arcadia umbrella.

Big Bang mark two needs good typing

In a week's time Gordon Brown will press the button that launches Big Bang mark two when he opens the Stock Exchange's new trading system. Leo Paterson describes Saturday's final dress rehearsal, a day when typing mistakes moved the markets.

Market-makers will be brushing up on their typing skills this week, ready for the launch of order-driven trading next Monday, 20 October. On Saturday, in the sixth and final trial of the new system, inputting errors caused mayhem. Simple typing

mistakes, like inserting one too many zeros, led to substantial swings in the FTSE 100.

Unlike the old quote-driven system, where prices were agreed over the phone, the new system, SETS, requires market-makers to type into an electronic order book the number and the price of shares they wish to sell.

Errors are potentially ruinous, as once a trade has been executed companies will be bound by the inputted prices. Counter-parties may waive their right to trade at the quoted prices, but are under no obligation to do so.

In an industry characterised by cut-throat competition, traders will certainly not want to rely on such displays of gallantry

from their rivals. Hence the pressure on market-makers to make sure their typing is spot on.

Some have even opted to ban the computer option to sell shares at the "best available" price because this would result in sales at bargain-basement prices if these briefly became available on the system.

Next Monday is unlikely to see as many teething troubles as Saturday's dress rehearsal. To start with, most, if not all, companies will by then have fail-safe procedures in place, which market-makers will have to override manually to enter prices significantly different from prevailing levels. Some participants in Saturday's trial had these controls switched off.

What is more, as a spokes-

person from the Stock Exchange put it, "People will key in with more caution when it's the real thing".

These are unlikely to be the only teething difficulties. Angela Knight, a former Treasury minister and now chief executive of the Association of Private Client Investment Managers and Stockbrokers, has expressed concern that small investors will lose out.

Under the new rules, trades less than £4,000 will typically be dealt with under the existing quote-driven system by so-called retail service providers (RSPs). Mrs Knight said at the weekend her main concern was that there would be fewer RSPs serving the market in the years to come.

WH Smith backs down and agrees to meet Waterstone

The embattled retailer WH Smith has agreed to sit down with Tim Waterstone early this week to discuss his revised proposals for its restructuring, probably tomorrow. Tom Stevenson reports on the change of heart at Smiths.

The latest unexpected twist in the saga marks a substantial climb-down by Smiths' executive directors, led by Richard Handover, chief executive, and Keith Hammill, finance director. Throughout last week the two executives insisted Mr Waterstone's proposals to install himself as chief executive of Smiths and gear it up with more debt were wholly without merit.

The decision to meet follows a week of briefings of institutional investors by the Waterstone camp which persuaded some shareholders to press the board into entering negotiations.

Mr Waterstone's plans, which originally envisaged a 200p-per-share payout to shareholders, funded by almost £600m of new debt, were being refined over the weekend by Waterstone's adviser SBC Warburg to meet investors' concerns.

The new proposals to be discussed tomorrow will see a lower payout to shareholders of between 125p and 150p. They will also receive shares in a new company with around £400m of new debt. That will soothe fears that Mr Waterstone was planning to add too much financial gearing to the company's already high operational indebtedness.

It also emerged over the weekend that WH Smith's four non-executive directors were not present at the meeting almost two weeks ago at which it was decided to reject Mr Waterstone's initial approach.

Mr Handover was originally quoted as saying the whole board was present at the meeting and was unanimous in its rejection of the takeover proposals.

According to one non-executive director, none of Martin

Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, Marjorie Scardino from Pearson, Patrick Lupo and Michael Orr had attended.

WH Smith has denied strongly any dissent among its board members over the decision, but stories were circulating at the weekend that Jeremy Hardie, the non-executive chairman who first discussed the proposals with Tim Waterstone, is likely to be replaced.

The past two weeks have been an extraordinary baptism of fire for Smith's new chief executive, Richard Handover, who announced Mr Waterstone's approach and the board's rejection of it on his first day in the top job. He has been with the group for 26 years, but was only recently named as successor to Bill Cockburn, who quit unexpectedly after just 18 months.

It was widely suspected that WH Smith had tried and failed to find a suitable outsider to take on the job before turning to Mr Handover. But it is still thought likely that shareholders will back his fresh attempt to rejuvenate the underperforming retailer.

Companies fail to turn strategy into action

Over three-quarters of companies around the world set out clear strategic plans, but nearly half admit that they are bad at putting them into action, according to research published today.

Moreover, the study *Strategy into Action*, by management consultancy Quest Worldwide, finds that many plans lack vision, with strategies tending to be driven by demands from shareholders or the board. The focus is usually on financial targets.

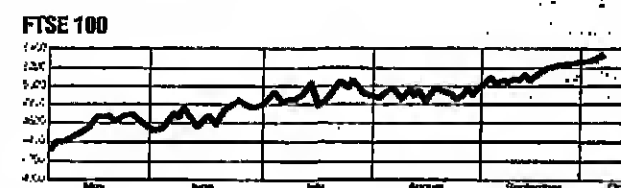
Two-thirds of the companies surveyed said they achieved these predominantly financial targets, though they made less comment on their success with cultural, operational and market or customer issues.

One of the difficulties identified by Quest was that strategy statements sometimes lacked focus and set too many priorities with inappropriate time-scales.

Another was the lack of commitment at all levels of the workforce resulting from strategies being developed at the highest levels.

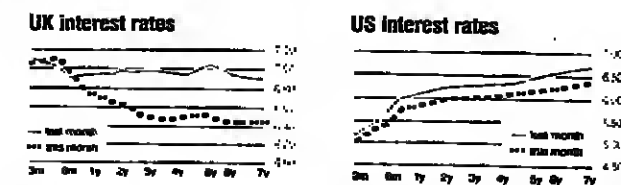
—Roger Trapp

STOCK MARKETS



Indices	Close	1W % chg	1M % chg	3M % chg	YTD % chg
FTSE 100	2,227.30	-103.50	-1.94	5330.8	3,337
FTSE 250	4674.30	13.00	0.27	4893.9	4,341
FTSE 350	2514.10	-41.20	-1.61	2555.3	1,949.2
FTSE All Share	2455.53	-21.36	-0.86	2492.4	1,925.8
FTSE SmallCap	2378.7	17.90	0.76	2380.3	2,120.4
FTSE MidCap	1307.8	10.60	0.82	1345.5	1,198.7
FTSE AIM	1007.7	0.90	0.09	1136.0	1,003.8
Dow Jones	8045.21	8.63	0.22	8260.3	5,921.7
Nikkei	17376.92	-270.53	-0.45	21612.3	17,000.7
Hang Seng	14273.12	-554.90	-3.16	16673.3	12,055.2
Dax	4188.52	-85.19	-1.99	4438.9	2,559.3

INTEREST RATES

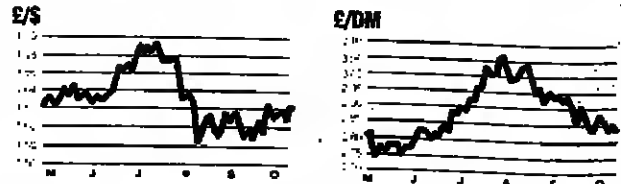


Money Market Rates	3 months	6 months	1 year	10 year	30 year
UK	7.35	7.50	7.63	7.31	6.51
US	5.75	6.25	6.50	6.14	5.44
Japan	0.53	0.04	0.58	-0.05	2.00
Germany	3.81	0.50	4.10	0.88	5.82

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Falls
Cap Radio 534 6 11.97	Radial Electron 228.5 -25 -13.5
Cell Telecom 576.5 10 11.71	Bloomsbury 515 22.5 -4.35
Railtrack 1019.5 12 11.48	HSBC Hldgs 1954.5 -4 -0.20
CRT Group 312 -4.5 11.23	Brit Biotech 120 -4 -3.33

CURRENCIES



Pound	1.8215	+0.57c	1.5865	0.6167	-0.22p	0.6384
Dollar	2.8370	-0.08p	2.3941	1.7510	-0.05p	1.5284
Yen	194.58	-92.68	174.15	120.00	-92.08	111.18
E Index	100.10	+0.00	87.20	\$ Index	104.50	-0.70

OTHER INDICATORS

	Close	Wk's chg	Yr Ago	Index	Chg	Yr ago	Short Int	
Brent Oil (\$)	20.69	-0.82	23.19	GDP	112.80	3.50	109.0	24-06
Gold (\$)	329.65	-5.20	382.30	RPI	159.30	3.6	153.78	07-06
Silver (\$)	5.14	-0.01	4.97	Base Rates	7.00		5.75	

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GAVYN DAVIES
ON THE
CHANGING OF
THE MONETARY
GUARD

The European Central Bank's invisible hand

"Europe raises interest rates" screamed the headlines and, on the surface, it seemed like business as usual for the Bundesbank last Thursday. The increase of 0.3 per cent in its key repo rate, the first rise in German interest rates for five years, shook the financial markets as in days of old. The rise was explained by the Bundesbank entirely on German domestic grounds. Other central banks dutifully followed, whatever their misgivings about their own economic circumstances. Just another example, it seemed, of the European dog allowing itself to be wagged by the German tail.

But all was not what it seemed. In fact, last Thursday was almost the last hurrah of an organisation which has dominated economic life in post-war Europe, but which is now making active preparations to disappear next year. Far from showing that the Bundesbank remains all-powerful in Europe, last Thursday's moves foreshadowed a new era in which the Bundesbank will become nothing more significant than a local operating arm of the European Central Bank (ECB). It would be going only slightly too far to claim that the changing of the monetary guard has already occurred - that European monetary decisions have already passed to a "virtual ECB" which, as yet, has no officials, but whose invisible hand, guided by the Maastricht Treaty, already dominates affairs.

A crazy statement? Consider the following. In 15 months' time, assuming the single currency goes ahead on time, there will be a single short-term interest rate ruling throughout the European economic and monetary union (EMU) area. (Admittedly, there could still be some very small residual differences between rates in different countries, but these

will be tiny enough to be forgotten for present purposes.) At present, there is a gap of more than 3 per cent between the lowest rates in the EMU area - 3.3 per cent in Germany and France - and the 6.5 per cent rates which persist in Italy. Central bankers throughout the Continent now accept that this gap will need to be eliminated by the start of 1999, and freely admit that the only questions are how fast this should happen, and on what compromise interest rate all the different countries should converge.

Everyone therefore concedes that there will inevitably be a significant rise in German and French rates, and a similar decline in Italian and Spanish rates, before very long. None of these changes will be driven by domestic considerations in the countries concerned. More than that, all four of the major continental economies will almost certainly end next year with interest rates which are quite markedly different from the rates required for domestic purposes. This simple fact has a straightforward corollary - since each

of the central banks realises that it must soon set rates which converge on the European average, it follows that they can no longer also set the rates which are required for domestic purposes. And this will inevitably apply to the Bundesbank as much as it does to anyone else. Indeed, it already does.

In the current state of the German economy, it is far from clear that the Bundesbank can really justify a rate rise on domestic grounds. Unemployment is not only higher than it has been since the Weimar Republic, but it continues to rise by 30,000 per month. Inflation has ticked up a fraction as a result of the weakness of the mark, but it remains under 2 per cent, and labour costs will actually decline this year by more than 1 per cent.

Monetary growth, trotted out as usual by the Bundesbank to justify the rate rise to the public, does no more than provide a routine fig leaf for a central bank council which needs to dampen political opposition. It would scarcely have been sensible to explain to a Euro-sceptic

German public that they are facing higher interest rates at a time of record unemployment solely because Italy and Spain are being allowed into the first round of monetary union. But again, it is only exaggerating slightly to say that this is exactly what has happened.

In theory, it would have been feasible for all European interest rates to have converged downwards until they eventually reached the German and French levels, which were 3 per cent before last week. Indeed, this is exactly what has been happening for the last couple of years. But this is where the invisible hand of the virtual ECB comes in.

The national central banks already realise that the handover process to the ECB needs to be smooth and gradual, without any huge leaps in rates which would destabilise economies and unsettle markets. This implies that the convergence process needs to be quite long and drawn out; and it implies that rates must not simply converge, but converge towards a level which the ECB will find appropriate for the whole of the EMU area in a year's time. Of course, no one knows exactly where this will be, but it will certainly not be anywhere near 3 per cent. More likely it will be at least as high as 4 to 4.5 per cent. Recognising this, the national central banks have already started the necessary programme of convergence.

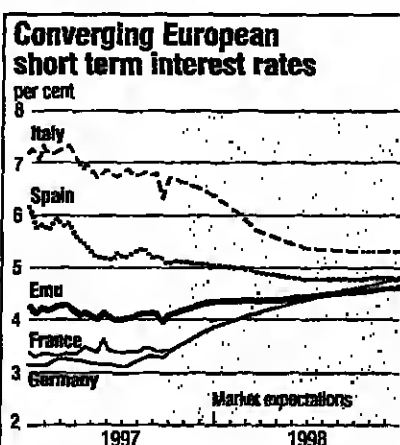
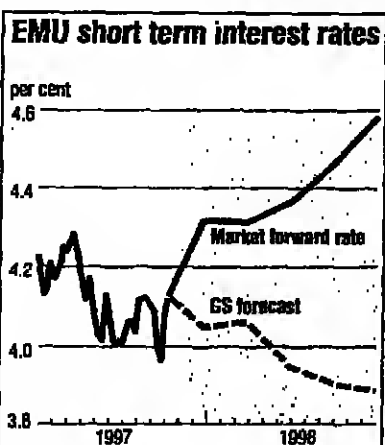
It is important to realise that this will not necessarily involve any monetary tightening for Europe as a whole. If all national interest rates converge on a level of 4 per cent, the weighted average level of rates in the EU will remain at exactly today's level, and we will observe a pure process of convergence, with the overall monetary stance of the "virtual ECB" remaining precisely unchanged.

This is, in fact, what has happened in the past few months - the easing effect of the cuts in Italian and Spanish rates during the summer was almost exactly wiped out by the tightening effect of the German and French action last Thursday. So far, it is wrong to say that Europe has tightened policy, as so many commentators have been writing over the weekend. The virtual ECB has been sitting on its invisible hands, leaving average European rates precisely unchanged.

To understand what is going on as 1998 progresses, it will be increasingly important to think in these unfamiliar terms, concentrating more on the weighted average of EMU rates, and less on the domestic German rates set by the Bundesbank. Today, everyone in the financial markets knows to the decimal point what the Bundesbank is doing to its repo rate, and almost no one has any clue about the average level of EMU rates the virtual ECB is setting. By the end of next year, possibly even by next May when the starting exchange rates for the single currency will be pre-announced, the situation will be exactly reversed.

As this reversal happens, the Bundesbank will entirely lose its power to set and control the overall level of European interest rates, and will instead be forced to set German rates on a path which neatly converges to whatever rates the real ECB will set on 1 January 1999. In the past, Germany has set interest rates and Europe has followed. Quite soon, Europe will set rates and Germany will follow.

The message of last Thursday is that this quite extraordinary loss of German hegemony - which has always been the real reason why France has always been so obsessed with achieving EMU - has already started.



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Fingers crossed as Cassini slings its way to Saturn

The Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn

- 1 Cassini launched today. (The spacecraft will head inwards towards Venus, circling Earth twice to use the effect of gravity to gather speed before heading out to Saturn)
- 2 First Venus flyby, 26 April 1998
- 3 Second Venus flyby, 27 June 1999
- 4 Earth flyby, 24 August 1999
- 5 Jupiter flyby, 6 January 2000
- 6 Cassini arrives at Saturn, 1 July 2000, and begins long orbit of the planet
- 7 Huygens landing probe detaches from Cassini and arrives on Titan, Saturn's moon, 27 November 2004

Mars Venus

Sun

Earth

Jupiter's orbit

Saturn's orbit

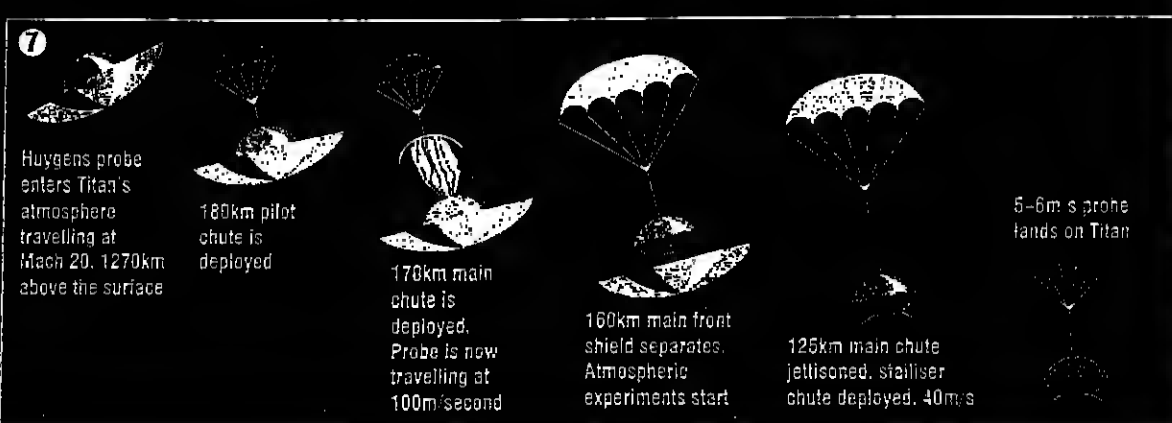
Jupiter

Saturn



Artist's impression of Huygens probe landing on Titan

GRAPHIC: KRISTINA FERRIS



The £2.2bn Cassini spacecraft is probably the last mission to the planet Saturn during our lifetimes and could revolutionise our knowledge about the second biggest planet in the solar system. But first it has to get there, says Charles Arthur, Science Editor.

There will be more crossed fingers than a church full of liars this morning as scientists around the world wait for a launch of the Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn. The lift-off is set for about 10am British time from the launchpad in Florida, and British scientists will be eager to hear that it has been successful after a couple of disastrous failures in the past 18 months.

Cassini is a seven-year mission which will be probably the last during our lifetimes to the ringed planet Saturn. It will send a sophisticated robotic spacecraft, equipped with 12 scientific experiments, to orbit Saturn for four years, plus a European lander craft - the Huygens probe - which will crash land on one of Saturn's moons, Titan, and examine its strange chemistry. Saturn is the second-largest planet in the solar system after Jupiter, and is a gas giant, made up mostly of hydrogen and helium.

Its placid-looking, hutter-scotch-coloured face masks a windswept atmosphere where jet streams blow at 1,800 kilometres per hour and swirling storms of methane ice roil just beneath the cloud tops. Previous spacecraft passing by Saturn found a huge and complex magnetic environment, called a magnetosphere, where trapped protons and electrons interact with each other, the planet's rings

and surfaces of the moons. Titan, the only moon in the solar system with its own atmosphere, was chosen for further investigation because remote chemical analysis of its atmosphere suggests that it contains many complex molecules of carbon and nitrogen. Though too cold to support life, it could hold clues to how the primitive Earth evolved into a life-bearing planet. It has an Earth-like, nitrogen-based atmosphere and a surface which probably consists of rocks interspersed with freezing lakes of ethane and methane, beneath a continuous drizzle of a sticky brown organic rain.

Ideal holiday destination? Perhaps not. But Cassini will offer fascinating insights into what makes Saturn so unusual. "We're trying to understand the origins of the solar system," said Professor Fred Teller of Oxford University. "And Saturn and Titan are places to do it." While Huygens examines

the atmosphere and surface of Titan (as long as it doesn't sink into a lake), the Cassini spacecraft will continue investigating the planet's rings and its magnetosphere, using equipment made by scientists at Imperial College. "This is the biggest spacecraft we have ever sent into space," said David Southwood, of the physics department, Imperial College. It is even set up to control Cassini and Huygens during the long trip to its destination. It will still be possible to carry out experiments and update computer programs while the spacecraft is en route.

Getting there is no picnic though. Heading directly out towards Saturn is unfeasible: the rocket could not carry enough fuel. Instead, Cassini will head inwards, towards Venus, and twice use the "slingshot" effect of its gravity to gather speed, before heading outwards past Earth in August 1999, and then on towards Saturn - arrival date, June 2004.

But some people have worried about Cassini's nuclear power source. Solar cells would be insufficient to power Cassini beyond Mars, as sunlight is too dispersed. So just like many

earlier missions, Cassini will use plutonium dioxide - mixed into a ceramic matrix, like china - to generate heat and electricity. Environmental groups have protested that if the rocket

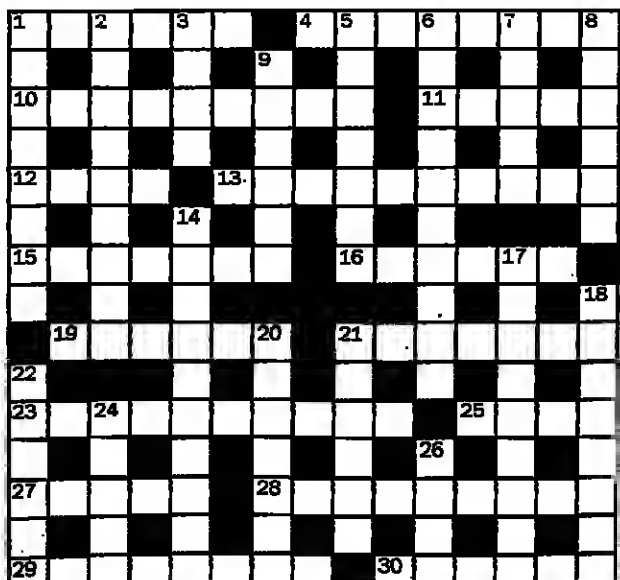
blows up on lift-off (as those with British experiments on board have recently done) then the radioactive fall-out would be deadly. But the US government, and a number of inde-

pendent auditing groups, disagree. "The health risks to humans in the event of an accident are negligible," the American Astronomical Society's members declared on Friday.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3428, Monday 13 October

By Portia



- ACROSS**
- 1 Site of native quarter (6)
 - 4 Uncontaminated soil's without additive (8)
 - 10 Reason it's in the form of a statement (9)
 - 11 Hesitate when fellow leaves to fetch change (5)
 - 12 Heard man would get notice (4)
 - 13 Person's grabbed by a joker but isn't embarrassed (2,4,4)
 - 15 Come across collar on the Northern duck (3,4)
 - 16 Lure European teardrop who settles in fine (6)
 - 19 Top rate in that case has bearing on capital (6)
 - 21 Writer's society is taken in by loud redhead (7)
 - 23 Confused at gut feeling about police officer (10)
 - 25 Jerk gripping Henry gets rough (4)
 - 27 Also known as backing Old Style in Japan (3)

- 28 Wait to suspend a contest (4,5)
- 29 Extremely difficult to angle one close inside (8)
- 30 General's to continue moving out of the way (6) DOWN
- 1 Tough to beat young beginner (8)
- 2 Time to invest in such a new variety of food crop (6,3)
- 3 Many round about display traditional knowledge (4)
- 5 Ecclose article on church sacrament (7)
- 6 Brief passage Roy reproduced (10)
- 7 He pretends to be one of the crowd (5)
- 8 Deal with journalist shortly after class (6)
- 9 Must include nine Italian masier (6)
- 14 Lower rise to follow (10)
- 17 Hear what's said to be a slogan (9)
- 18 Holiday centre's become cheerful, we're told (8)
- 20 Cuts second lot of offal (7)
- 21 Up against a piece sewn on (6)
- 22 Rent's high resulting in financial expropriation (3-3)
- 24 Deadly plant found in Mid-Wales area (5)
- 26 Isn't even put up with a decorative border (4)

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